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ABSTRACT

In 1987, the State of Maine encouraged schools to make fundamental organizational changes necessary to ensure that all children are successful in school. This booklet reports on the progress of 10 Maine schools that are wrestling with fundamental questions about the purpose, content, and organization of schooling. Each school is profiled with a description of the school, a flowchart that traces some of the critical points in its "journey" into restructuring, and a summary of important happenings that is organized around five themes. The themes are: the difference for students, the difference in teaching and learning, the difference in the organization and operation of the school, the connections that are being built within the district, and the questions that are being asked. A synthesis of insights gathered about the 10 schools has found that while there is no single recipe, there are common ingredients in the schools' restructuring experiences. These ingredients can be grouped under four broad headings: getting clear on the focus of change; making change organizational and systematic; managing the ongoing change process; and deploying state restructuring grant funds to spur change. A discussion of future actions at the local and state levels concludes this booklet. (RR)

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WORK IN PROGRESS: RESTRUCTURING IN TEN MAINE SCHOOLS

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MAINE STATE RESTRUCTURING PROGRAM

Ten schools, a steering committee, and the Maine Department of Education have comprised the Maine State Restructuring Program. The members of the steering committee are listed inside the back cover. Contact information for the schools and the department of education is provided below:

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WORK IN PROGRESS:
RESTRUCTURING IN TEN MAINE SCHOOLS

Prepared for the Maine Department of Education
by Pat L. Cox and Jane deFrees
The Regional Laboratory for Educational Improvement
of the Northeast and Islands

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A SHORT HISTORY OF THE MAINE STATE RESTRUCTURING PROGRAM

In October 1987, the Maine Department of Education initiated the Restructuring Program by inviting all schools in the state to send teams to a meeting on restructuring. Teams representing 135 districts attended the meeting, where participants discussed critical components of restructuring and were invited to apply for state restructuring grants. Schools interested in exploring restructuring further were asked to send letters by December 1987 indicating the support of the school committee, the superintendent, the principal and 75% of the building faculty. In early 1988 the state department sponsored a meeting for the 35 schools that had submitted letters; at that meeting consultants from Synectics, Inc., provided assistance in vision building. Soon after, the department of education issued a request for proposals that asked applicant schools to:

- develop a shared vision;
- describe the process of planning the proposal;
- detail an implementation plan;
- document their capability to undertake the plan; and
- have their proposal reviewed and approved by 75% of the faculty, the principal, the school committee, and the superintendent.

Nineteen schools submitted proposals in March 1988. The Maine State Restructuring Program Steering Committee — comprised of representatives from the department of education, educator associations, higher education, and assistance organizations — reviewed the grant applications and interviewed teams from 11 schools.

Ten grants were awarded during the Summer of 1988: three schools were awarded $50,000 each; seven received $10,000 each. The grants were renewable yearly for three years; each reapplication included full faculty review of progress to date. In addition to financial assistance, the ten schools have received technical support from the department of education, the opportunity to network with other schools, and structured time to reflect on their experiences. While this particular program formally ends in Summer 1991, the school staffs see their work as ongoing. For its part, the department of education is committed to supporting learning-centered restructuring efforts statewide.

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John R. McKernan Jr.
Governor

Eve M. Bither
Commissioner

Richard H. Card
Deputy Commissioner

In 1987, under the direction of Commissioner Eve M. Bither, the State of Maine took a leadership role as one of only five states in the nation to encourage schools to make the fundamental organizational changes necessary to ensure that all children are successful in school. Acting as a catalyst for educational reform, Maine's Department of Education provided funds and networking opportunities through its Innovative Education Grant Program for the ten schools described in this publication. For further information about this program contact: Dr. Richard H. Card, Deputy Commissioner at (207) 289-5112.

The Maine Department of Education ensures equal employment, equal educational opportunities and affirmative action regardless of race, sex, color, national origin, religion, marital status, age or handicap.

Opinions in **Work in Progress: Restructuring in Ten Maine Schools** do not necessarily reflect the official policies of the Maine Department of Education.

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INTRODUCTION

This booklet reports on "work in progress" at ten Maine schools that are wrestling with fundamental questions about the purpose, content, and organization of schooling, including:

- What does it mean to be a successful learner?
- What must we do to ensure successful learning for ALL students?
- How will we know when students are learning successfully?

Making school work for all kids is a new idea. It is often talked about but rarely done.

The ways of answering these questions are as diverse as the schools and the communities of which they are a part, yet the stories of these ten schools suggest some common themes. The people in these schools have found that they are having similar experiences and insights. Some of these insights are reflected in the margins of this text.

Successful Learning for ALL Students. The school staffs and others are working from the premise that current forms of schooling do not meet the needs of our changed society, in which every child must both understand the basics and develop higher order thinking skills, have both breadth and depth of knowledge, and acquire both the skills of self-management and those of working with others. For these ten schools, restructuring means fundamental changes in the way their communities and staffs think about education and how teaching and learning occur in schools.

Restructuring involves changing our beliefs about the way school is "supposed to be."

What Must We Do? The visions created by the ten schools include educating all students, not just certain groups; raising and clarifying expectations; personalizing teaching and learning; and applying research on teaching, learning, and child development to actual classroom practice. Realizing these visions means organizing the doing and learning of adults to foster the learning and doing of youngsters.

Organizing around student learning has implications not just for individual classrooms and the schools, but also for the systems in which the schools are situated. Elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools face different challenges, yet each has much to learn from the others. Moreover, changes at the elementary level affect middle schools; middle school changes affect high schools; and the reverse is true as well. Changes at every level affect relationships with parents, communities, and a wider resource network, including institutions of higher education, the state department of education, and others.

Once upon a time someone decided that a child's performance could be expressed as A-B-C-D-E or F; now we need more meaningful ways to know how a child is doing.

How Will We Know? As the ten schools and others work to "invent school," they talk about school as "a community of self-correcting scholars" and "a center of inquiry" for all participants. Rather than just relying on standardized test content, all the schools are developing criteria for student learning outcomes that focus on what

young people should know and be able to do when they complete their schooling.

The Individual Journeys of Ten Maine Schools. In the next pages, we profile each school with a paragraph or two of description, a flow chart that traces some of the critical points in its "journey" into restructuring, and a summary of important happenings that is organized around five questions:

- What's different for students?
- What's different about teaching and learning?
- What's different about the organization and operation of the school?
- What connections are being built
  — within the district?
  — with parents and community?
  — with assistance resources such as universities?
- What questions are being asked?

Vision + will + $$ + a sense of humor are essential supplies for the long haul.

The ten schools described in this booklet have participated in the Maine State Restructuring Program, a department of education-sponsored initiative that has provided funding to undergird their work. However, money alone does not make the difference here; what does is the shared vision developed by each school and its community — along with the shared will to see it through. You will find in these pages few easy answers; rather they raise essential questions and describe some significant steps being taken by the schools. Each school envisioning the future must embark on its own journey. As the Chinese sage would counsel, it begins with a single step.

RESTRUCTURING AT THE PRIMARY SCHOOL LEVEL

For elementary schools, restructuring involves concentrating on cognitive and meta-cognitive development. This means not only bringing more rigor and scholarship to the lower grades but also helping students to reflect on their learning. This does not mean abandoning the elementary teacher's traditional role as nurturer of socio-emotional development, but balancing the two. Principals and teachers are finding ways to stimulate the learning of all children in ways appropriate to their different styles and developmental ages — to challenge each to his or her maximum potential, rather than settle for labels and lower expectations. As one principal said, "Don't kid yourself that there is no tracking in elementary school. We're trying to undo that."

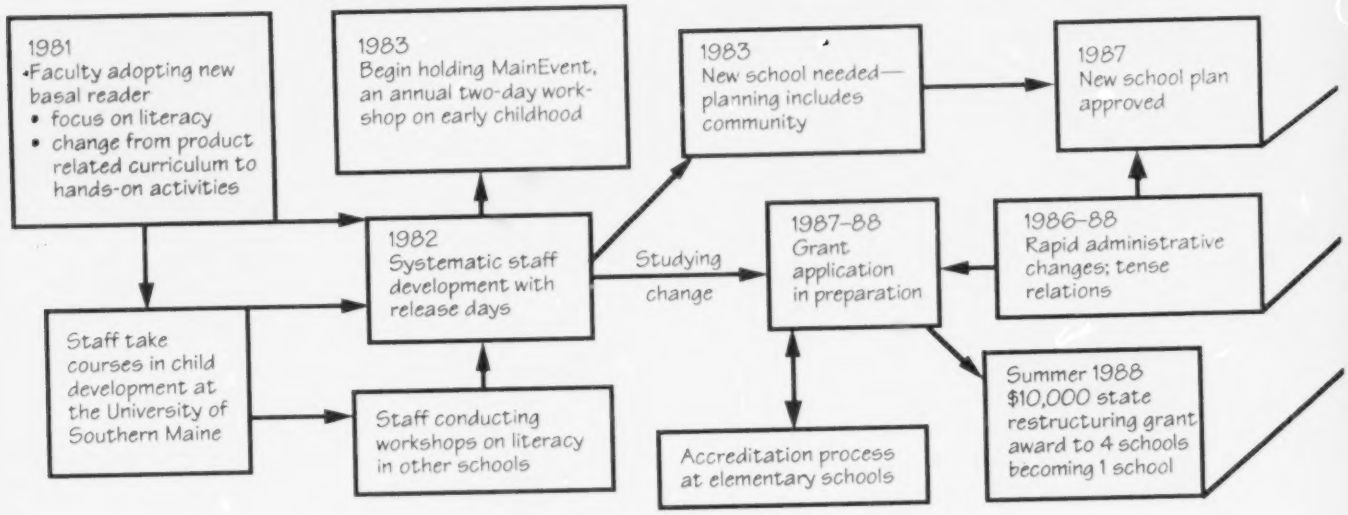
The stories of the three primary schools that have participated in the Maine State Restructuring Program appear on the following pages. The schools are:

- Windham Primary in Windham
- York Elementary in York
- Narragansett Elementary in Gorham

WINDHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL: "Giving power back to kids, teachers, and parents"

The community of Windham, located about ten miles west of Portland, currently serves approximately 2500 students in grades K–12. A growing population has increased the school enrollment each year. For eight years, the Windham School Department has been examining primary level education to better meet the needs of all children. When the Windham Primary School opened in the fall of 1990, all 800 K–3 students were together in a new building for the first time, moving from four old, overcrowded schools. Planning for the new building provided a catalyst for rethinking the way education was being delivered to young students. "We have been accustomed to giving the answers, so it's a real change to be on the other end, to ask,'what are we going to do?' We want always to be in the position of asking questions — restructuring is a way of thinking, not an event or a happening."

WINDHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL'S JOURNEY


1981
•Faculty adopting new basal reader
• focus on literacy
• change from product related curriculum to hands-on activities
1983
Begin holding MainEvent, an annual two-day workshop on early childhood
1983
New school needed—planning includes community
1987
New school plan approved
1982
Systematic staff development with release days
Studying change
1987–88
Grant application in preparation
1986–88
Rapid administrative changes; tense relations
Staff take courses in child development at the University of Southern Maine
Staff conducting workshops on literacy in other schools
Accreditation process at elementary schools
Summer 1988
$10,000 state restructuring grant award to 4 schools becoming 1 school

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING AT WINDHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL

1. WHAT'S DIFFERENT FOR STUDENTS?

All kids:

- see themselves as competent successful learners who are responsible for themselves
- are together in the classroom, with teachers as facilitators
- move on as they learn and develop; they are not limited by grade level or grouping
- work in a variety of groupings and with different teachers
- engage in active learning

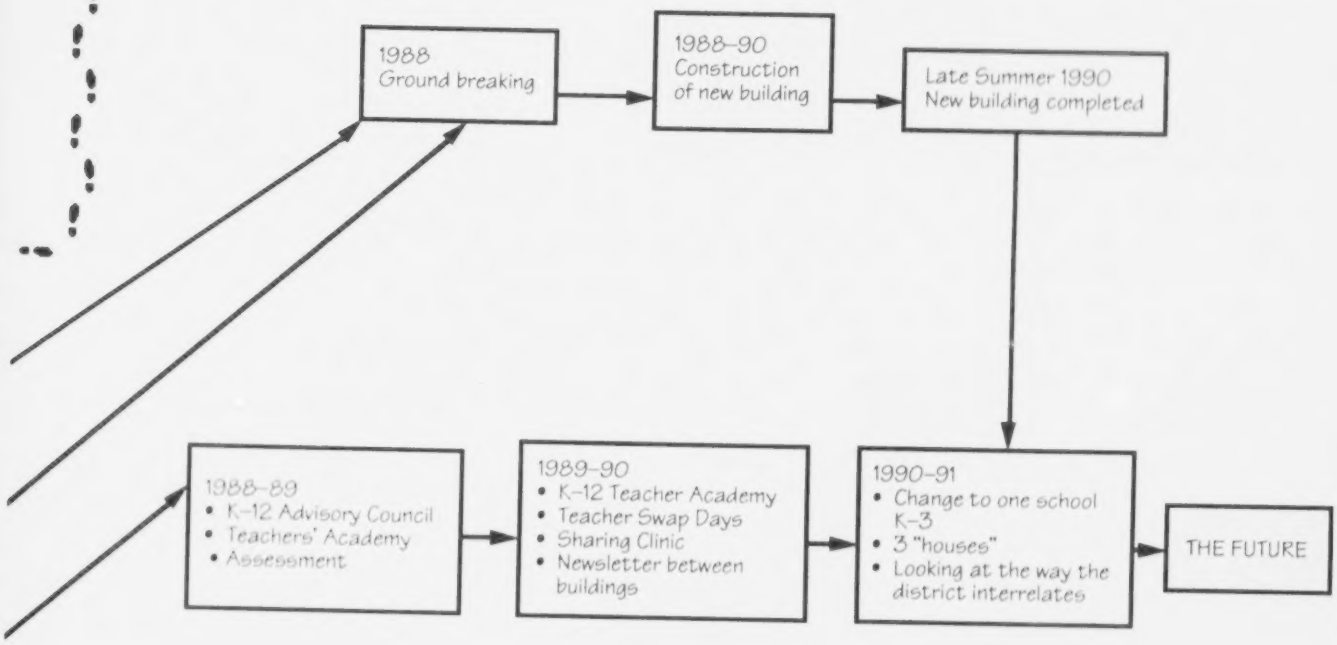
2. WHAT'S DIFFERENT ABOUT TEACHING AND LEARNING?

Teachers:

- provide flexible options to meet individual needs
- consider students' learning styles and developmental levels in grouping

Teachers (continued):

- use multi-age, multi-ability groupings with special education students mainstreamed when appropriate
- use hands-on instructional strategies
- integrate learning by using a writing process theme approach that is literature-based
- use alternative assessment strategies, including structured teacher observation of all students and portfolios
- assess a student's social, emotional and physical growth as well as academic improvement
- have special services integrated into the classroom when appropriate



3. WHAT'S DIFFERENT ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION AND OPERATION OF THE SCHOOL?

The school is organized to provide:

- a small school atmosphere in a large building by dividing the student population and teachers into three "houses"
- one early release day each week for students so that there can be staff development for faculty
- pertinent research and resources to all staff collected by a teacher-researcher who serves in that role two days a week
- flexibility for teachers to schedule within their houses
- advancement policies to place students according to their needs

4. WHAT CONNECTIONS ARE BEING BUILT?

Within the school district:

- K–12 Advisory Council facilitates systemwide involvement with restructuring
- swap day with teachers in upper grades
- annual K–12 Teachers' Academy in the summer serves to draw the school system together

With parents and community:

- K–3 Parent Council has been honored as a national model

With assistance resources:

- staff from the University of Southern Maine worked with school faculty to design a developmental approach to early childhood education
- university consultant worked with the school during restructuring process

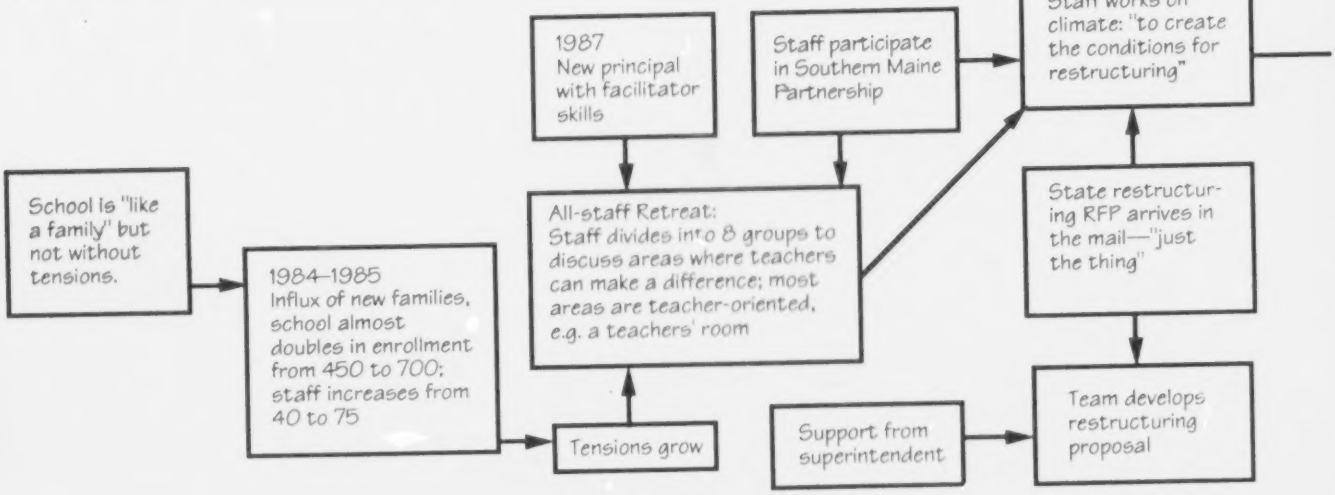
5. WHAT QUESTIONS ARE BEING ASKED?

- How do we maintain a small school atmosphere in a large school?
- How do we make sure that the change process is healthy for all children?
- How do we refocus and refine assessment and record-keeping?
- What are the links between restructuring and staff development and how do they tie into certification?

YORK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: *"The talent and expertise have always been there; now it's being tapped"*

York Elementary School is one of three schools in a district located in a popular coastal community in southern Maine. In summer, this area swells with tourists, and in the past several years it has become a haven for young families from New Hampshire and Massachusetts who have come north to find more affordable housing. As a result, York Elementary nearly doubled in size and now enrolls 700 students K–4. The staff nearly doubled in size as well, from 40 to 75 people. The principal and teachers had already initiated efforts to improve basic working conditions for staff and were ready to move on to teaching and learning issues when the state's restructuring RFP was issued. Awarded a $10,000 grant, York Elementary has emphasized a process that "focuses on people, their attitudes, feelings, and behaviors, in order to create a climate in which positive change and growth are natural consequences." Among the changes that have been made are the "family" groups that allow adults and children alike to feel at home in a large school. The staff has also attended to the impact of change on both children and adults, realizing that even positive shifts—for example, the move to the new school building now under construction—are stressful.

YORK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL'S JOURNEY


School is "like a family" but not without tensions.
1984–1985
Influx of new families, school almost doubles in enrollment from 450 to 700; staff increases from 40 to 75
Tensions grow
1987
New principal with facilitator skills
Staff participate in Southern Maine Partnership
All-staff Retreat:
Staff divides into 8 groups to discuss areas where teachers can make a difference; most areas are teacher-oriented, e.g. a teachers' room
1987–1988
Staff works on climate: "to create the conditions for restructuring"
State restructuring RFP arrives in the mail—"just the thing"
Support from superintendent
Team develops restructuring proposal

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING AT YORK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

1. WHAT'S DIFFERENT FOR STUDENTS?

All kids:

- can participate in a proactive student council at the school level
- are encouraged to make decisions about changes that affect them
- may belong to a family group
- experience a more integrated curriculum
- are involved in a wellness program allowing them to make better choices about snacks

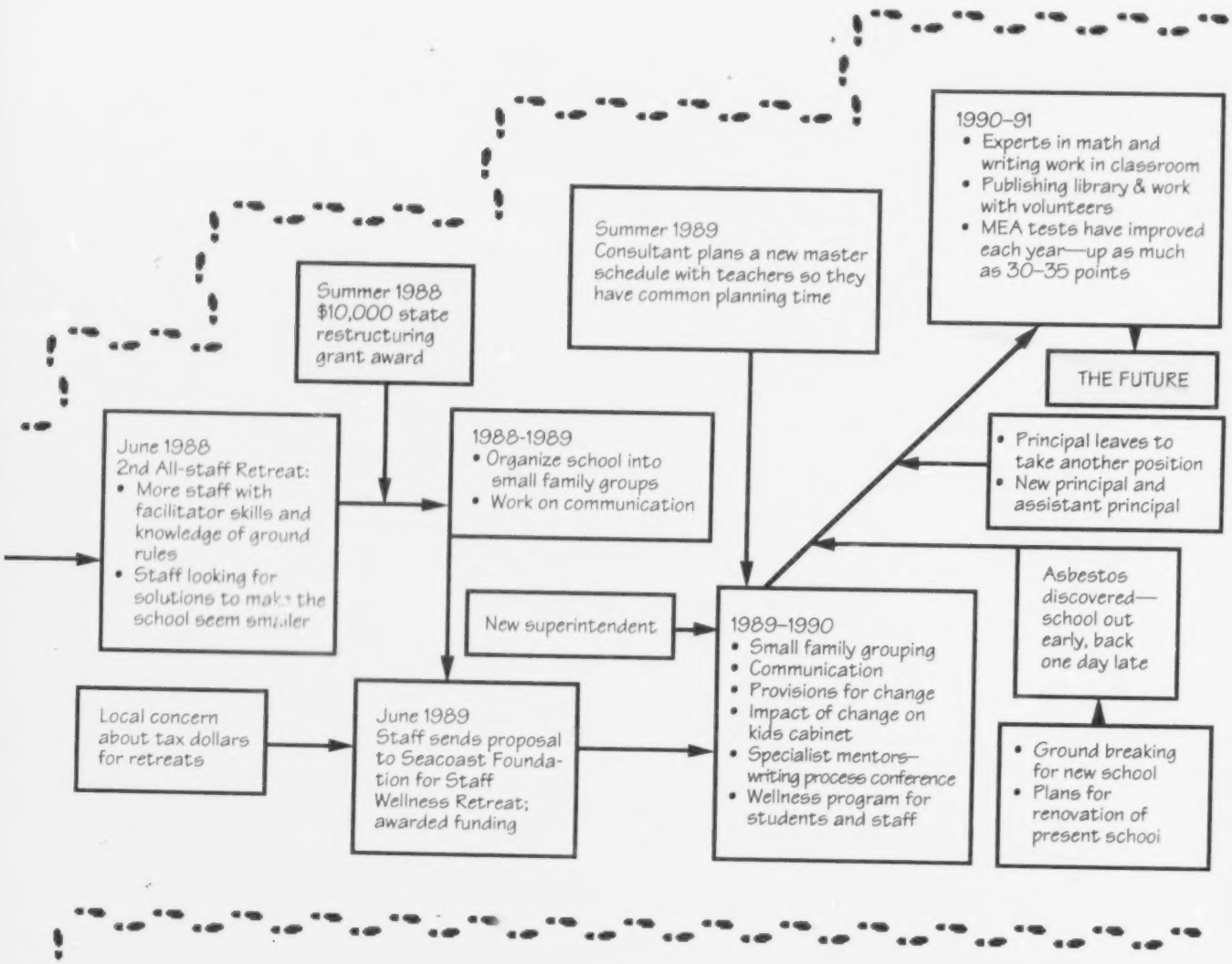
2. WHAT'S DIFFERENT ABOUT TEACHING AND LEARNING?

Teachers:

- work on writing, math, and publishing with mentors in their classrooms

Teachers (continued):

- work in different family groupings of two or more teachers and their students: these include four first grade teachers and 80 students; four multigrade teachers and 80 students (two combination 1–2 classes and two combination 3–4 classes); one transition teacher, one first grade teacher and two second grade teachers who work with 80 students; and two third grade teachers who team with 40 students
- have explicitly worked on wellness issues, having acknowledged the stress that change brings
- are focusing on critical thinking skills across the curriculum
- have acquired the knowledge and skills for teamwork, e.g., decision making, communication, and facilitation skills
- who are specialists go to the students in their learning environments to provide services and work with all students


1990–91
• Experts in math and writing work in classroom
• Publishing library & work with volunteers
• MEA tests have improved each year—up as much as 30–35 points
Summer 1989
Consultant plans a new master schedule with teachers so they have common planning time
Summer 1988
$10,000 state restructuring grant award
THE FUTURE
June 1988
2nd All-staff Retreat:
• More staff with facilitator skills and knowledge of ground rules
• Staff looking for solutions to make the school seem smaller
1988-1989
• Organize school into small family groups
• Work on communication
• Principal leaves to take another position
• New principal and assistant principal
Asbestos discovered—school out early, back one day late
New superintendent
1989–1990
• Small family grouping
• Communication
• Provisions for change
• Impact of change on kids cabinet
• Specialist mentors—writing process conference
• Wellness program for students and staff
Local concern about tax dollars for retreats
June 1989
Staff sends proposal to Seacoast Foundation for Staff Wellness Retreat; awarded funding
• Ground breaking for new school
• Plans for renovation of present school

3. WHAT'S DIFFERENT ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION AND OPERATION OF THE SCHOOL?

The school is organized to provide:

- restructuring in five strands: empowerment, communication, change, wellness, and small family groupings
- an extended workday for restructuring committee teachers, who have coordinated the effort overall
- grade level teams, with rotating chairs for each grade level; grade levels meet monthly about curriculum
- six teams of staff to discuss organization-wide issues, each with a coordinator; coordinators meet twice per month with principal
- common planning time for family groupings through a master schedule developed by teachers with a consultant
- a climate that encourages staff to take initiative, e.g., the staff proposal to the Seacoast Foundation of New Hampshire, which funded a retreat on wellness
- ways to sustain the changes made in restructuring through hiring process, new teacher orientation, and staff development

4. WHAT CONNECTIONS ARE BEING BUILT?

Within the school district:

- as yet there are no connections with the middle school (5–6) and the junior high (7–8), although the York Middle School has begun a team/family approach to teaching, separate from the elementary school's restructuring

With parents and community:

- the staff has presented their work to the school board
- the school board is invited to an open house at the school
- active parent volunteers have rebuilt four playground areas
- the school is working to revitalize "Friends of Y.E.S."

With assistance resources:

- in-classroom staff development with specialist mentors
- active member of the Southern Maine Partnership, especially the assessment, K–8, and math strands

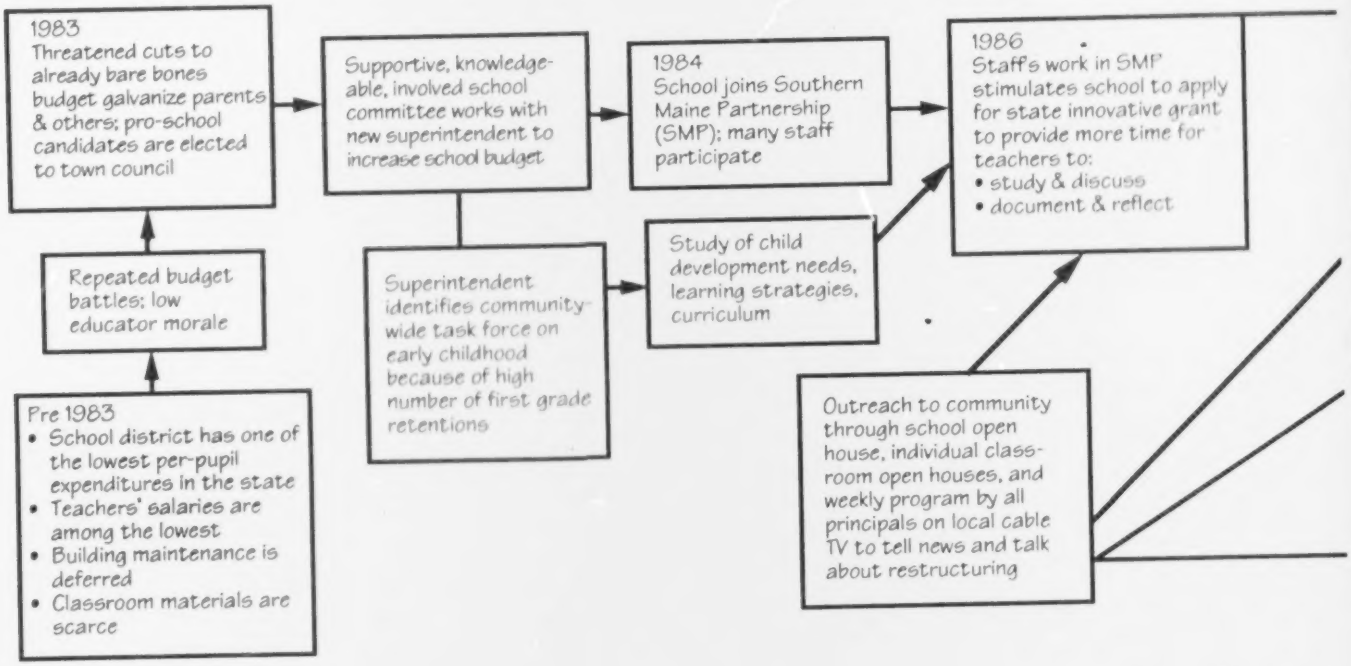
5. WHAT QUESTIONS ARE BEING ASKED?

- How are we going to reach out to the community?
- How do we foster communication among the schools in the district without imposing values?

NARRAGANSETT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: *"Becoming a center of inquiry"*

Narragansett Elementary School is located in Gorham, on the outskirts of Portland, Maine's largest city. It is one of six schools in a K–12 school district serving about 2000 students. The population in Gorham is growing rapidly. Until 1990, Narragansett had 580 students enrolled in grades K–3. The formation of a Kindergarten Center in another building in 1990 reduced the number of students at the school to 430, grades 1–3. Narragansett is one of two schools in the district receiving state restructuring grant funds, the other being Gorham High School. The school district has a long history of school improvement efforts. Gorham is also the location of the University of Southern Maine (USM), which has a strong education program. Narragansett has found the USM-sponsored Southern Maine Partnership, a network of schools engaged in questioning their practices, to be an invaluable vehicle for inquiry and exchange of ideas. In the same spirit that businesses fund R&D to keep their organizations at the cutting edge, Narragansett has used some of its restructuring grant to fund a position devoted to connecting the staff with research: "If we're going to be a center of inquiry, we have to go, think, do, and have access to information — and that takes money." At the same time, the Narragansett staff is acting on the realization that, to continue change over the long haul means that there must be a "community of leaders," with leaders coming forward as needed and then moving back to let others lead: "Nothing meaningful happens if only one person carries it."

NARRAGANSETT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL'S JOURNEY


1983
Threatened cuts to already bare bones budget galvanize parents & others; pro-school candidates are elected to town council
Supportive, knowledgeable, involved school committee works with new superintendent to increase school budget
1984
School joins Southern Maine Partnership (SMP); many staff participate
1986
Staff's work in SMP stimulates school to apply for state innovative grant to provide more time for teachers to:
• study & discuss
• document & reflect
Repeated budget battles; low educator morale
Superintendent identifies community-wide task force on early childhood because of high number of first grade retentions
Study of child development needs, learning strategies, curriculum
Pre 1983
• School district has one of the lowest per-pupil expenditures in the state
• Teachers' salaries are among the lowest
• Building maintenance is deferred
• Classroom materials are scarce
Outreach to community through school open house, individual classroom open houses, and weekly program by all principals on local cable TV to tell news and talk about restructuring

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING AT NARRAGANSETT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

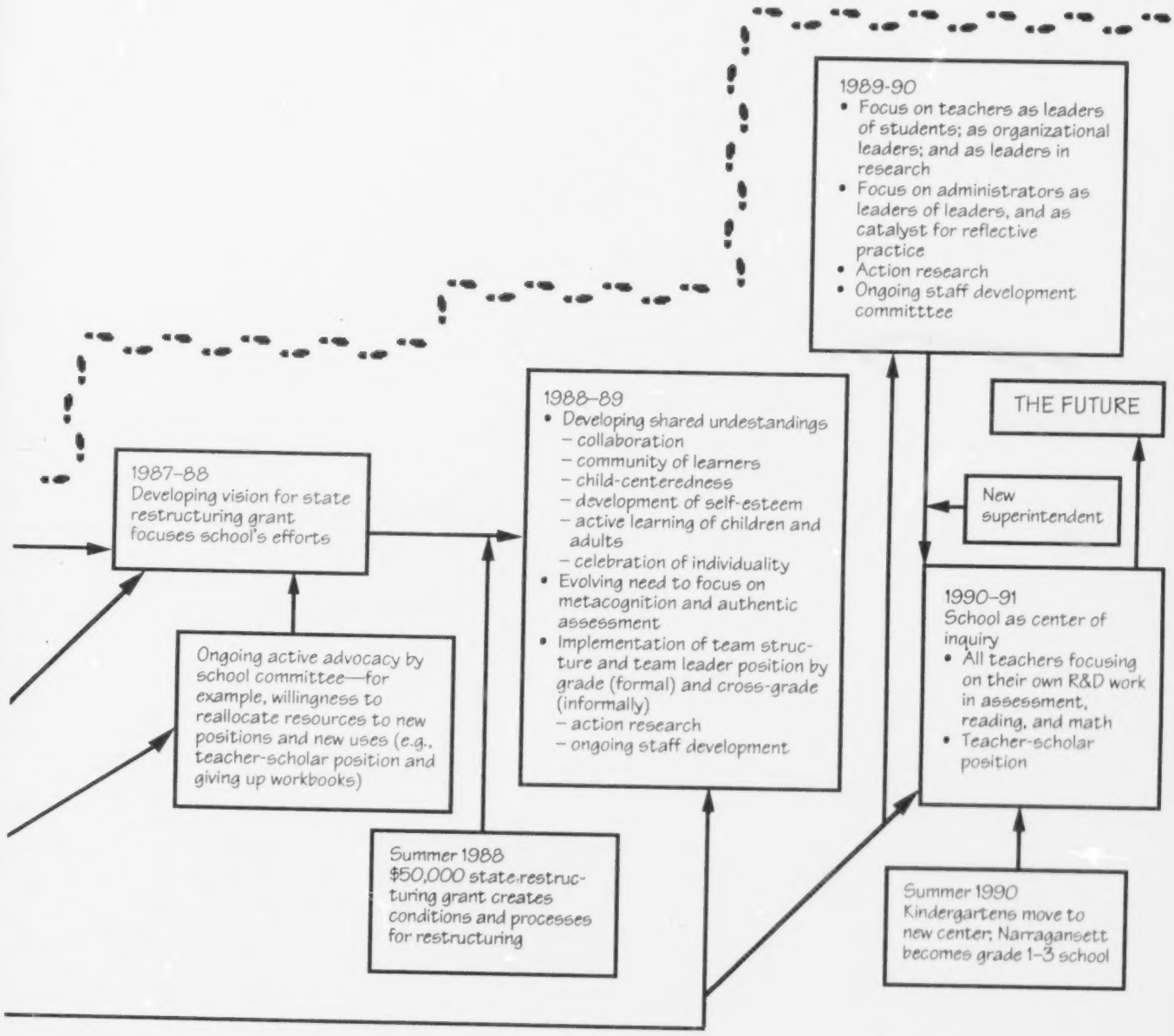
1. WHAT'S DIFFERENT FOR STUDENTS?

All kids:

- have an opportunity for success as active learners
- learn in variety of ways with a variety of materials
- are appreciated for their developmental stages and differences

All kids (continued):

- feel safe and successful in school
- see inquiry being respected and modeled
- have choices and involvement in the learning process
- are empowered with skills and treated with dignity
- are taught to think about, talk about, and assess their own learning process


1989-90
• Focus on teachers as leaders of students; as organizational leaders; and as leaders in research
• Focus on administrators as leaders of leaders, and as catalyst for reflective practice
• Action research
• Ongoing staff development committtee
THE FUTURE
1988–89
• Developing shared undestandings
– collaboration
– community of learners
– child-centeredness
– development of self-esteem
– active learning of children and adults
– celebration of individuality
• Evolving need to focus on metacognition and authentic assessment
• Implementation of team structure and team leader position by grade (formal) and cross-grade (informally)
– action research
– ongoing staff development
New superintendent
1987–88
Developing vision for state restructuring grant focuses school's efforts
1990–91
School as center of inquiry
• All teachers focusing on their own R&D work in assessment, reading, and math
• Teacher-scholar position
Ongoing active advocacy by school committee—for example, willingness to reallocate resources to new positions and new uses (e.g., teacher-scholar position and giving up workbooks)
Summer 1988
$50,000 state restructuring grant creates conditions and processes for restructuring
Summer 1990
Kindergartens move to new center; Narragansett becomes grade 1–3 school

2. WHAT'S DIFFERENT ABOUT TEACHING AND LEARNING?

Teachers:

- are reflective practitioners modeling inquiry
- have as a key question "how is this child smart?"
- trust one another so all can succeed in his/her own style of teaching
- have the opportunity to try new programs and practices
- engage in cross-grade-level teaching
- team both within and across grade levels

Teachers (continued):

- have the opportunity to stay with same students for two years
- develop curriculum using children's prior knowledge and curiosity
- have the opportunity to study and to conduct research projects
- use more child-centered assessment approaches
- are working with a district technology specialist to develop a cumulative portfolio assessment system K–12 that uses multiple media (video, document scanners, audio recorders) to record student progress

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING AT NARRAGANSETT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (continued)

3. WHAT'S DIFFERENT ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION AND OPERATION OF THE SCHOOL?

The school is organized to provide:

- team leader positions for teachers
- time for teachers to work with and observe colleagues and children at all grade levels
- professional development for all faculty, through which staff learnings have led to a "common language" in which to discuss education
- services to students in the classroom rather than in separate programs, e.g., students with disabilities are mainstreamed
- paraprofessional help in every classroom
- clerical assistance to dignify student work through "publishing" and other preparation of materials and to allow teachers more time to listen to children
- the opportunity for the principal to make facilitation of change an ongoing part of her role
- the position of teacher-scholar, which funds one staff member fulltime for a year to engage in intensive study and to assist colleagues in gathering information, developing and sharing research

4. WHAT CONNECTIONS ARE BEING BUILT?

Within the school district:

- working with the computer coordinator at the junior high to develop multi-media assessment portfolio
- strong support from superintendent
- the high school is involved in its own restructuring project
- the other primary school in the district is creating its own restructuring vision

With parents and community:

- parents work with teachers to place students in the appropriate learning settings
- parent volunteers are active in the school
- community television network features weekly reports from principals and scenes at the schools

With assistance resources:

- membership in Southern Maine Partnership with the University of Southern Maine "taught us to think and not to be complacent"
- networking with other schools engaged in restructuring

5. WHAT QUESTIONS ARE BEING ASKED?

- How does a restructuring school link with other schools in the same district?
- How does one share a changing school culture to keep the restructuring going?
- How does one find the funding from the local school budget to continue the initiatives?
- Looking into metacognition: how do kids perceive themselves and their learnings and what strategies do we give them about how they think?
- How do we know what is important to teach and how do we assess that?

RESTRUCTURING AT THE MIDDLE SCHOOL LEVEL

Middle school means more than a school that serves students in the middle grades. The term connotes a philosophy and organization of education very different from the junior high school: rather than being a replica of the senior high school, a middle school strives to balance the traditional secondary school concentration on subject matter with a focus on the developmental needs of the young adolescent. Today, schools that serve pre- and early adolescents have a "leg up" on restructuring because the middle school movement has provided a research-based foundation for the transformation of junior highs into places that truly are the middle ground between the student-focused elementary schools and the subject-focused secondary schools.

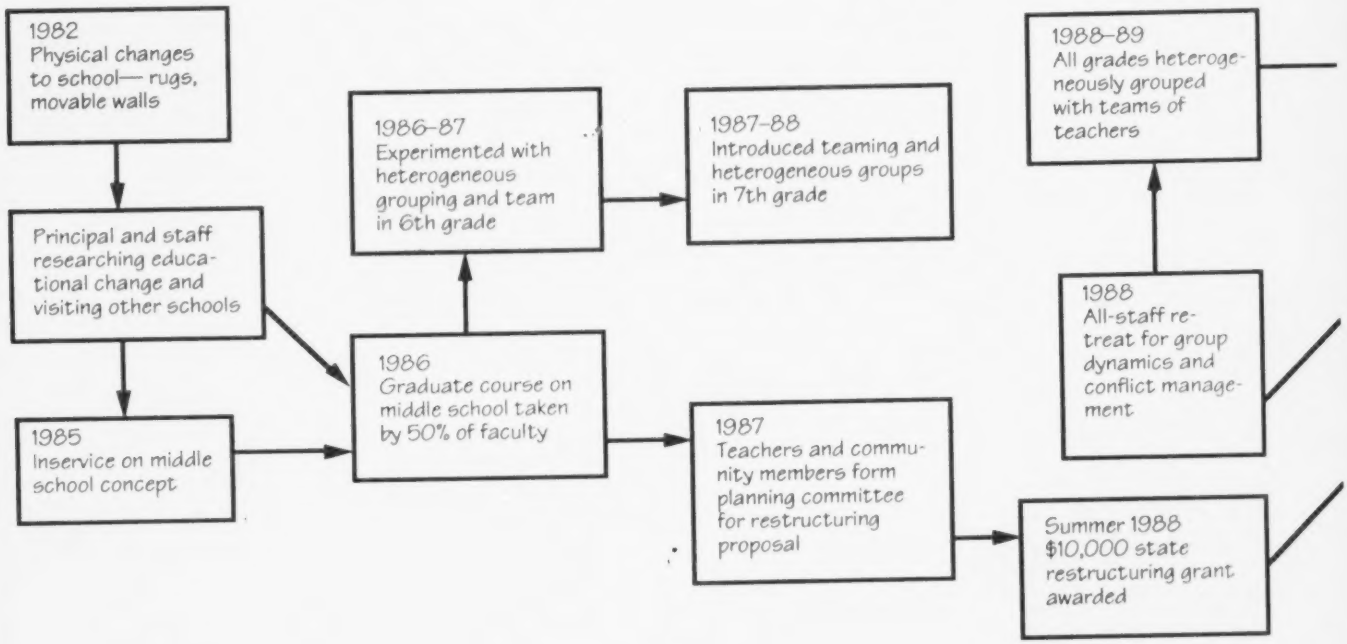
The stories of the two middle schools that have participated in the Maine State Restructuring Program appear on the following pages. The schools are:

- SeDoMoCha Middle in Dover-Foxcroft
- Skowhegan Area Middle in Skowhegan

SEDOMOCHA MIDDLE SCHOOL: *"Everybody is somebody"*

SeDoMoCha Middle School is located in Dover-Foxcroft, a rural community set in rolling hills 37 miles northwest of Bangor. SeDoMoCha serves 325 students in grades 6–8 from the towns of Sebec, Dover, Monson and Charleston. It is part of a rural K–8 school district with four elementary schools. Students attend a local private academy for high school. The communities are tightly knit: people choose to live in the area and stay there. They are supportive of their schools, but cautious about expenditures. The staff is extremely stable: for example, the principal has been at the school for fifteen years, starting as assistant principal and becoming building administrator in 1982. Faculty members said that the state restructuring grant "has allowed us to dream."

SEDOMOCHA MIDDLE SCHOOL'S JOURNEY


1982
Physical changes to school— rugs, movable walls
Principal and staff researching educational change and visiting other schools
1985
Inservice on middle school concept
1986
Graduate course on middle school taken by 50% of faculty
1986–87
Experimented with heterogeneous grouping and team in 6th grade
1987–88
Introduced teaming and heterogeneous groups in 7th grade
1987
Teachers and community members form planning committee for restructuring proposal
Summer 1988
$10,000 state restructuring grant awarded
1988
All-staff retreat for group dynamics and conflict management
1988–89
All grades heterogeneously grouped with teams of teachers

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING AT SEDOMOCHA MIDDLE SCHOOL

1. WHAT'S DIFFERENT FOR STUDENTS?

All kids:

- have a variety of learning options
- have an opportunity to succeed and are happy
- are treated equally and are trusted
- have higher self-esteem so there are few discipline problems
- feel they are in a safe environment
- can change groups if needed
- have an advisor

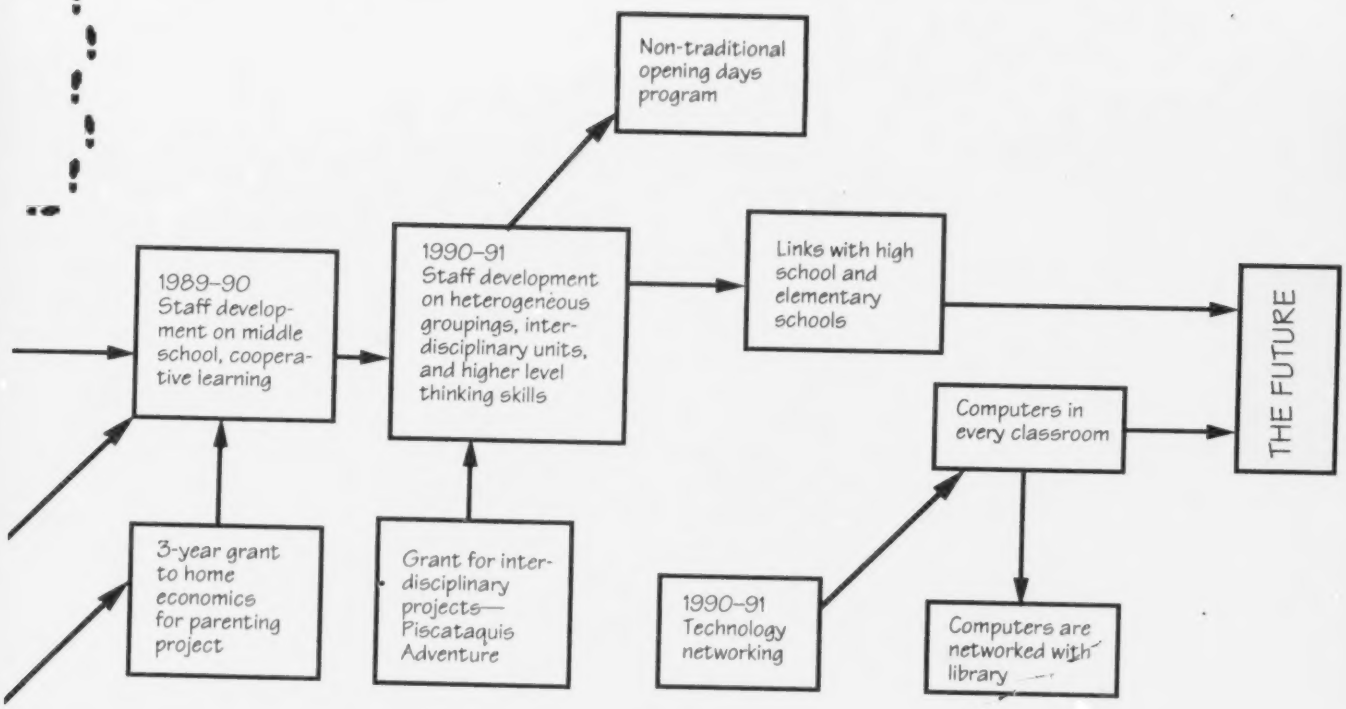
2. WHAT'S DIFFERENT ABOUT TEACHING AND LEARNING?

Teachers:

- use heterogeneous grouping to focus on individual needs of students

Teachers (continued):

- have adopted a holistic approach to students, rather than focusing solely on the academic; they teach people, not just subjects
- are close-knit as a staff and enjoy working together
- have been involved in staff development focused on the middle school concept, cooperative learning, heterogeneous grouping and interdisciplinary teaching
- have helped to develop a K–12 curriculum
- are developing interdisciplinary units
- run an advisor-advisee system for all students; advisors meet daily with students, conduct an activity weekly, and have an extended period once a month for special activities
- developed a two-day program for staff and students to open the 1990–91 school year that included talks on aspirations and dealing with disabilities, non-competitive sports activities, and workshops on such topics as study skills, getting organized, and understanding puberty


Non-traditional opening days program
1989–90 Staff development on middle school, cooperative learning
1990–91 Staff development on heterogeneous groupings, interdisciplinary units, and higher level thinking skills
Links with high school and elementary schools
THE FUTURE
Computers in every classroom
3-year grant to home economics for parenting project
Grant for interdisciplinary projects—Piscataquis Adventure
1990–91 Technology networking
Computers are networked with library

3. WHAT'S DIFFERENT ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION AND OPERATION OF THE SCHOOL?

The school is organized to provide:

- team building, group dynamics and conflict resolution for the entire school staff
- teachers teamed by grade level
- scheduling so teacher teams can meet every day
- weekly team leaders' meetings
- shared leadership with teachers taking turns serving as team leader each quarter
- grade level teams which schedule their own classes within structure of seven-period day; principal schedules specialties
- "management by walking around"
- computers networked within the building to give teachers and students greater access to information

4. WHAT CONNECTIONS ARE BEING BUILT?

Within the school district:

- middle school staff are working with elementary schools and high school to develop orientation for fifth graders and ninth graders
- some high school teachers attended summer middle school academy

Within the school district(continued):

- high school has started teaming in the ninth grade
- high school staff has had a retreat on group dynamics

With parents and community:

- community members were involved in developing restructuring grant proposal
- parents support school changes because kids are happy and want to go to school
- bi-weekly newsletter is sent home

With assistance resources:

- staff from University of Maine (Orono) assisted with planning for grant
- masters level course on middle school given at school by UM (Orono) faculty
- ongoing use of consultants from higher education and other educational resource centers

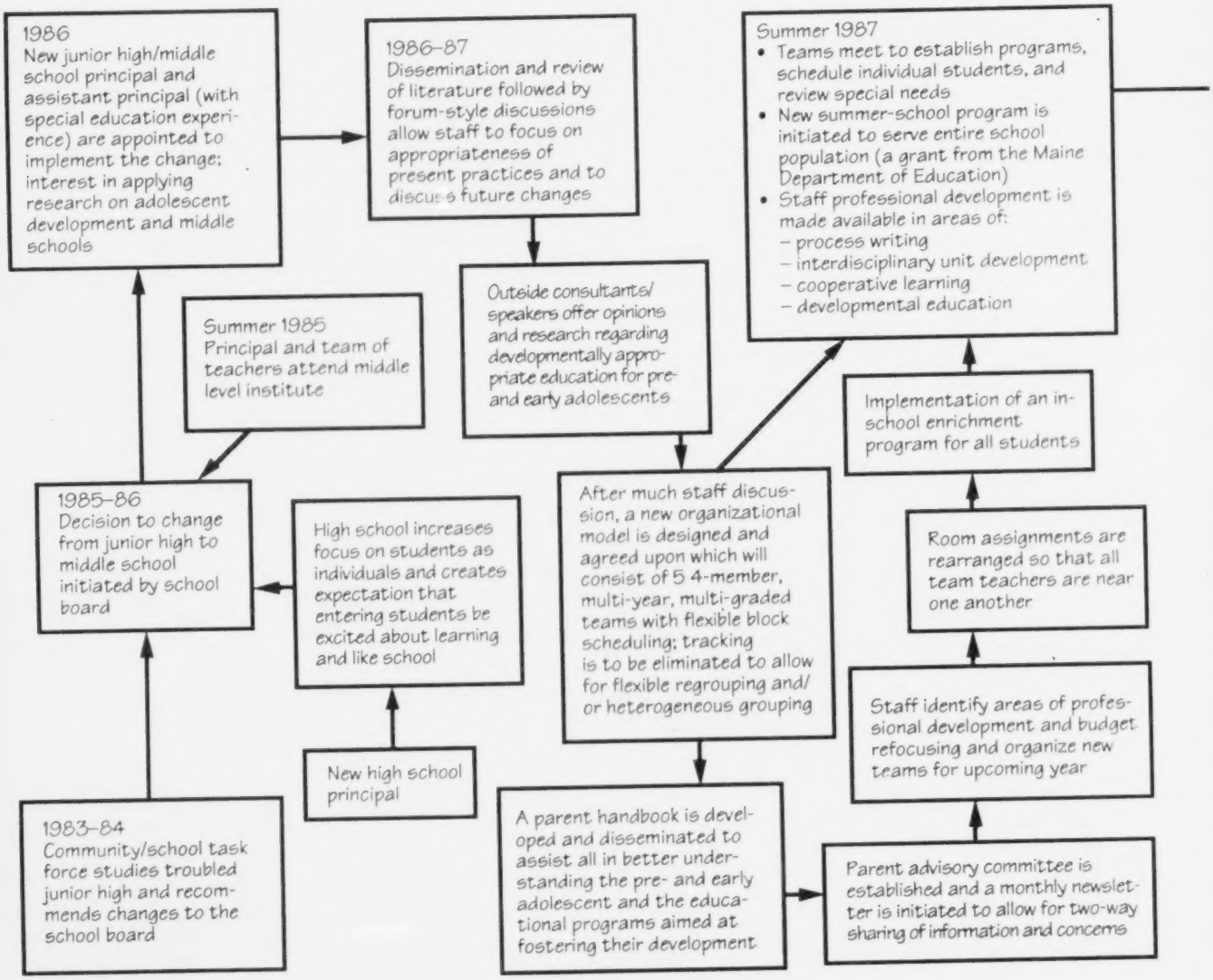
5. WHAT QUESTIONS ARE BEING ASKED?

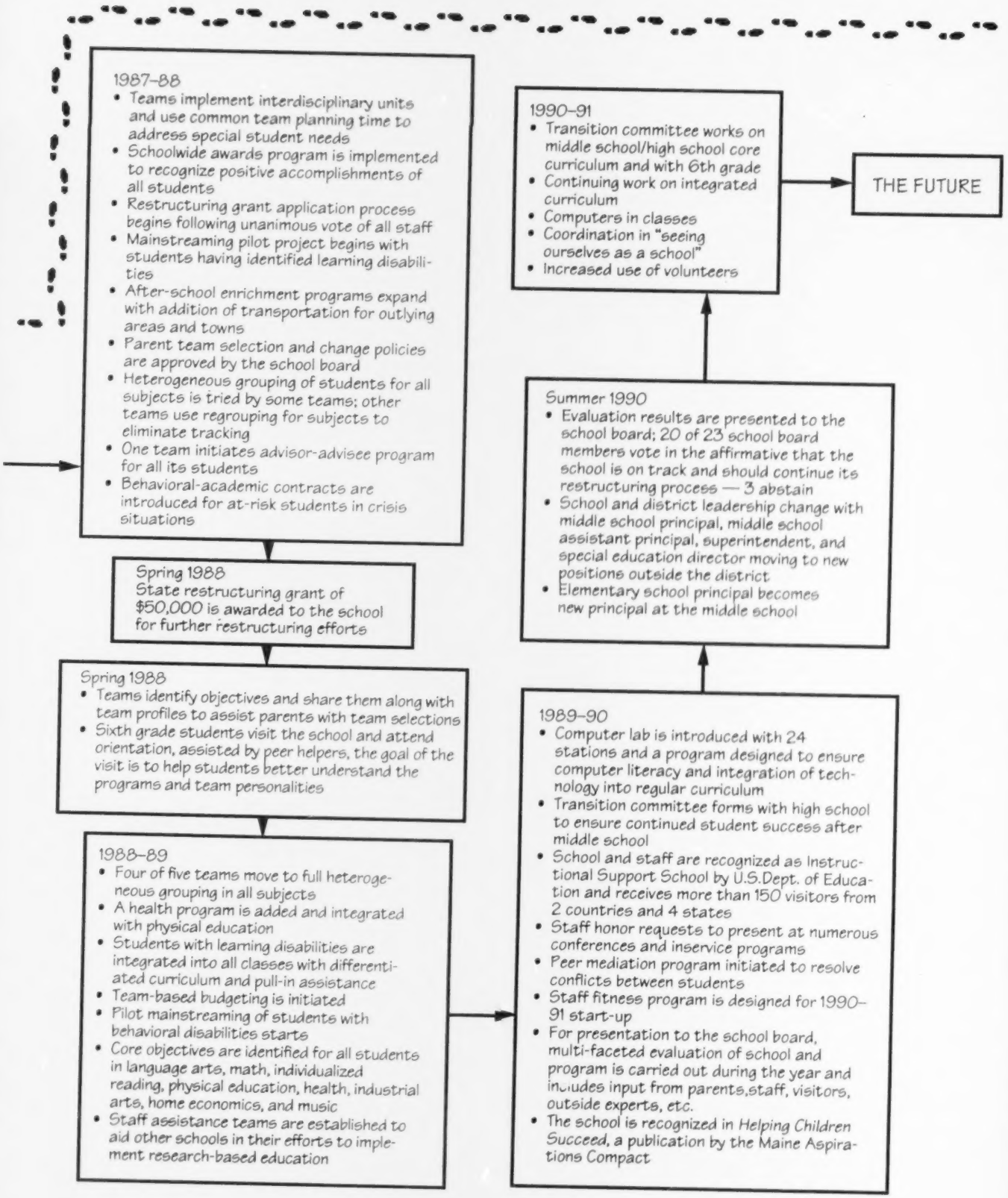
- How can the time be found to do "everything"—meeting, planning, presenting outside the district?
- How can more parent involvement with the school be encouraged?
- How can the momentum created by the changes be kept going?

SKOWHEGAN AREA MIDDLE SCHOOL: *"Is it good for kids?"*

Skowhegan Area Middle School is one of ten schools in a large (400 square miles) rural school district in western Maine. The town of Skowhegan is the location of a paper mill, a shoe factory, and other industries. The middle school serves approximately 490 students in grades 7 and 8 from six different towns. In less than three years, the school has changed from a traditional junior high school to a middle school designed "to better meet the needs of all the students." In 1983-84, a task force of junior high and high school teachers, community members, and board members studied the situation in the junior high and found that it was a "closed system," strictly tracked, tightly controlled, with a "we/they" tension between teachers and students, and the "lower" divisions in havoc. It was seen by parents and younger children as "not a good place to be." The task force recommended change, which was initiated by the School Administrative District #54 superintendent and school board; both were concerned about providing an educational experience appropriate to students in the middle years. A member of the school restructuring team noted, "We are on the right track with the middle school, but there is still lots to do."

SKOWHEGAN AREA MIDDLE SCHOOL'S JOURNEY


1983–84
Community/school task force studies troubled junior high and recommends changes to the school board
1985–86
Decision to change from junior high to middle school initiated by school board
1986
New junior high/middle school principal and assistant principal (with special education experience) are appointed to implement the change; interest in applying research on adolescent development and middle schools
Summer 1985
Principal and team of teachers attend middle level institute
1986–87
Dissemination and review of literature followed by forum-style discussions allow staff to focus on appropriateness of present practices and to discuss future changes
Outside consultants/ speakers offer opinions and research regarding developmentally appropriate education for pre- and early adolescents
Summer 1987
• Teams meet to establish programs, schedule individual students, and review special needs
• New summer-school program is initiated to serve entire school population (a grant from the Maine Department of Education)
• Staff professional development is made available in areas of:
– process writing
– interdisciplinary unit development
– cooperative learning
– developmental education
Implementation of an in-school enrichment program for all students
Room assignments are rearranged so that all team teachers are near one another
Staff identify areas of professional development and budget refocusing and organize new teams for upcoming year
Parent advisory committee is established and a monthly newsletter is initiated to allow for two-way sharing of information and concerns
A parent handbook is developed and disseminated to assist all in better understanding the pre- and early adolescent and the educational programs aimed at fostering their development
After much staff discussion, a new organizational model is designed and agreed upon which will consist of 5 4-member, multi-year, multi-graded teams with flexible block scheduling; tracking is to be eliminated to allow for flexible regrouping and/ or heterogeneous grouping
New high school principal
High school increases focus on students as individuals and creates expectation that entering students be excited about learning and like school


1987–88
• Teams implement interdisciplinary units and use common team planning time to address special student needs
• Schoolwide awards program is implemented to recognize positive accomplishments of all students
• Restructuring grant application process begins following unanimous vote of all staff
• Mainstreaming pilot project begins with students having identified learning disabilities
• After-school enrichment programs expand with addition of transportation for outlying areas and towns
• Parent team selection and change policies are approved by the school board
• Heterogeneous grouping of students for all subjects is tried by some teams; other teams use regrouping for subjects to eliminate tracking
• One team initiates advisor-advisee program for all its students
• Behavioral-academic contracts are introduced for at-risk students in crisis situations
Spring 1988
State restructuring grant of $50,000 is awarded to the school for further restructuring efforts
Spring 1988
• Teams identify objectives and share them along with team profiles to assist parents with team selections
• Sixth grade students visit the school and attend orientation, assisted by peer helpers, the goal of the visit is to help students better understand the programs and team personalities
1988–89
• Four of five teams move to full heterogeneous grouping in all subjects
• A health program is added and integrated with physical education
• Students with learning disabilities are integrated into all classes with differentiated curriculum and pull-in assistance
• Team-based budgeting is initiated
• Pilot mainstreaming of students with behavioral disabilities starts
• Core objectives are identified for all students in language arts, math, individualized reading, physical education, health, industrial arts, home economics, and music
• Staff assistance teams are established to aid other schools in their efforts to implement research-based education
1989–90
• Computer lab is introduced with 24 stations and a program designed to ensure computer literacy and integration of technology into regular curriculum
• Transition committee forms with high school to ensure continued student success after middle school
• School and staff are recognized as Instructional Support School by U.S.Dept. of Education and receives more than 150 visitors from 2 countries and 4 states
• Staff honor requests to present at numerous conferences and inservice programs
• Peer mediation program initiated to resolve conflicts between students
• Staff fitness program is designed for 1990–91 start-up
• For presentation to the school board, multi-faceted evaluation of school and program is carried out during the year and includes input from parents,staff, visitors, outside experts, etc.
• The school is recognized in *Helping Children Succeed*, a publication by the Maine Aspirations Compact
Summer 1990
• Evaluation results are presented to the school board; 20 of 23 school board members vote in the affirmative that the school is on track and should continue its restructuring process — 3 abstain
• School and district leadership change with middle school principal, middle school assistant principal, superintendent, and special education director moving to new positions outside the district
• Elementary school principal becomes new principal at the middle school
1990–91
• Transition committee works on middle school/high school core curriculum and with 6th grade
• Continuing work on integrated curriculum
• Computers in classes
• Coordination in "seeing ourselves as a school"
• Increased use of volunteers
THE FUTURE

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING AT SKOWHEGAN AREA MIDDLE SCHOOL

1. WHAT'S DIFFERENT FOR STUDENTS?

All kids:

- like school
- experience support from a number of different services
- have a variety of opportunities for personal and academic development
- are rewarded and honored for achievements
- have a say in team operation
- have continuity over two years with the same teachers
- have, with their parents, a choice of team and the option to change their team if desired
- have access to student mediators to resolve conflicts; focus on internal locus of control
- have representation in the Student Advisory Committee
- use computers in class and for team projects
- have a la carte options in the cafeteria

2. WHAT'S DIFFERENT ABOUT TEACHING AND LEARNING?

Teachers:

- use interdisciplinary core curriculum
- have heterogeneous teams with the same students for two years
- use alternative forms of assessment such as writing portfolios
- run small advisory groups for students
- use a contract system for students in both academic and behavioral area with parent participation
- are teaching computer use through classroom work
- are working on providing for gifted students through differentiated curriculum
- provide summer school options for both enrichment and remediation
- are encouraged to participate in professional development opportunities of their choice and to share their experience with their colleagues

3. WHAT'S DIFFERENT ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION AND OPERATION OF THE SCHOOL?

The school is organized to provide:

- no interruptions by bells during school day
- autonomous teacher teams handling curriculum, scheduling, and budget
- an aide with each team
- specialists who are integrated into classroom work
- mainstreaming for all students
- a special education consultant who works with all teams
- coordination by having weekly meetings for team leaders with the principal and monthly full staff meetings
- administrator supervision which supports teachers
- computers networked into classroom projects and curriculum

The school is organized to provide (continued):

- a student advisory committee which works with the principal
- a parent advisory committee
- a volunteer coordinator two days a week and a volunteer advisory committee
- a computer coordinator to staff laboratory and to assist teachers in using technology in classes
- extracurricular offerings after school to widen student experiences both intellectually and physically
- an extended school day with a late bus run
- student mediation and conflict management
- attention to research in making changes in the school

4. HOW ARE CONNECTIONS BEING BUILT?

Within the school district:

- middle school-high school transition team is meeting regularly
- interdisciplinary work is being extended to grades 9 and 10
- positions originally funded from grant are folded into district budget
- grant writing workshops are provided for administrators
- grants for innovation developed jointly with other schools in the district
- the superintendent and the school board demonstrate strong support for the school

With parents and community:

- parents choose team they prefer for their child
- any parent who wishes serves on advisory committee
- an active volunteer program is in place
- parents work with teachers on individual student contracts
- staff is working with high school and local businesses on increased career education
- school is serving as research site for Sports Medicine East, which will provide inservice training on health, diet, and exercise for the staff

With assistance resources:

- staff member coordinates practicum program for student teachers from two branches of the state university
- doctoral program graduate students do internships at school
- Synectics Inc., from Cambridge, MA, helped lead staff efforts with visioning and brainstorming
- training in cooperative teams by a consultant
- middle level research assistance from the University of Maine and the University of Southern Maine

5. WHAT QUESTIONS ARE BEING ASKED?

- How can we continue to improve and increase community awareness and support?

RESTRUCTURING AT THE HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL

High schools may have the hardest road to travel as they journey into restructuring. Held hostage by a master schedule that divides the curriculum along the traditional academic disciplines and shuffles students into a daily routine of seven 45- or 50-minute periods, high schools are beginning to face the fact that 65 percent of their students are not well served by this traditional structure. Just making time for the staff to meet is a major effort in and of itself.

For many high schools, restructuring is an effort to create meaningful connections between subjects and between the adults and students in the schools — to make learning coherent and to humanize the environment. Moreover, they are designing schedules and instruction that foster initiative-taking, acceptance of responsibility, cooperation, and problem-solving.

The cross-cutting pressures that all schools face as they restructure are particularly salient at the secondary level, where the final transition is into higher education or the world of work. Even as high schools search for approaches to learning and ways of demonstrating what students know and are able to do, they face the traditional college entry requirements that reinforce the old ways of teaching and evaluating students. And parents of college-bound students — often a vocal and influential group in the community — may exert pressure to maintain the status quo. At the same time, there are mounting pressures from the workplace to produce graduates who are able to analyze information, continually acquire new skills, and cooperate with fellow workers.

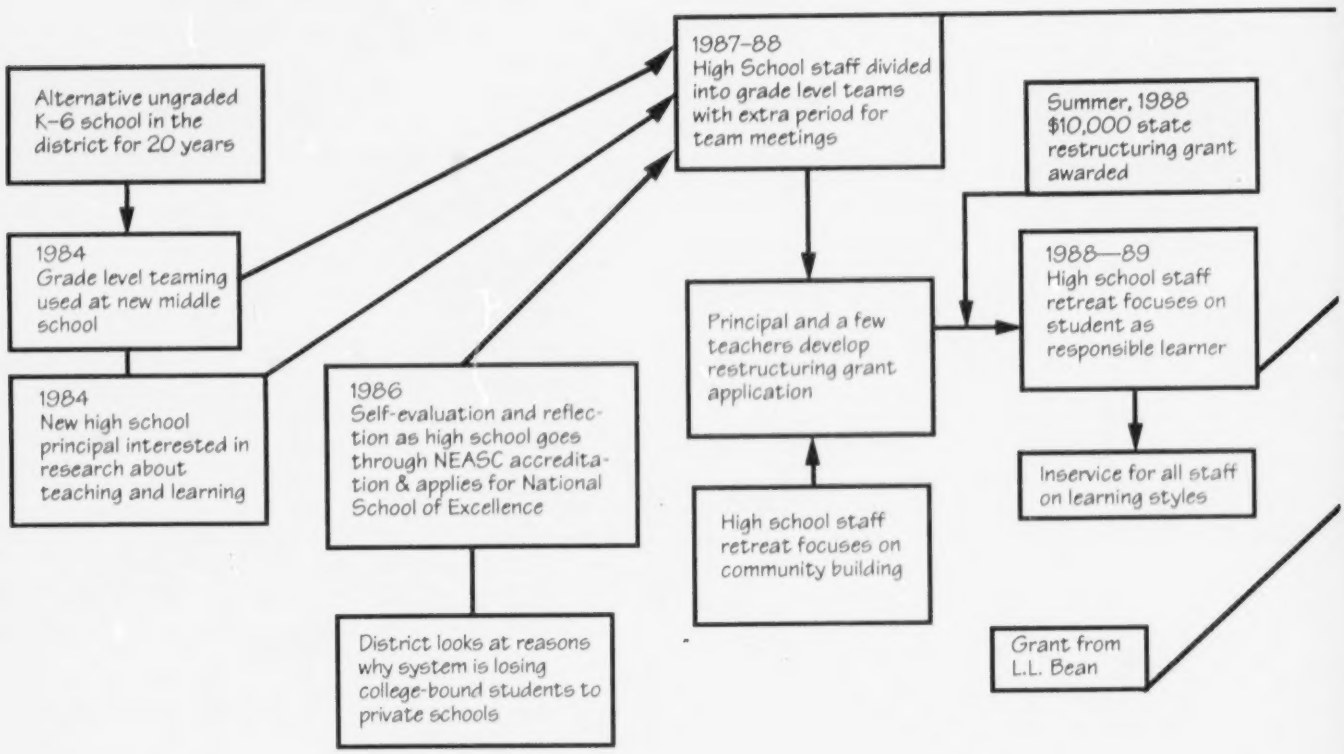
The stories of the five high schools that have participated in the Maine State Restructuring Program appear on the following pages. The schools are:

- Freeport High in Freeport
- Gorham High in Gorham
- Kennebunk High in Kennebunk
- Messalonskee High in Oakland
- Scarborough High in Scarborough

FREEPORT HIGH SCHOOL: *"People have to be ready for change"*

Freeport High School is a small school serving approximately 300 students, grades 9-12, in a coastal community 20 miles north of Portland. In the past 20 years Freeport has grown from a small town with a shoe factory, a fishing industry and L.L.Bean, a sporting goods store, to the major location of discount stores in Maine. Young professionals moved into Freeport during these years so the population is now a mix of long time residents and newcomers. Reflecting on progress during the second year of the grant, a member of the Freeport High School restructuring committee commented: "We spearheaded or encouraged a variety of efforts—perhaps too many for our own good. The committee has decided to limit its tasks next year for the sake of doing just a few things quite well."

FREEPORT HIGH SCHOOL'S JOURNEY


Alternative ungraded K-6 school in the district for 20 years
1984 Grade level teaming used at new middle school
1984 New high school principal interested in research about teaching and learning
1986 Self-evaluation and reflection as high school goes through NEASC accreditation & applies for National School of Excellence
District looks at reasons why system is losing college-bound students to private schools
1987-88 High School staff divided into grade level teams with extra period for team meetings
Principal and a few teachers develop restructuring grant application
High school staff retreat focuses on community building
Summer, 1988 $10,000 state restructuring grant awarded
1988—89 High school staff retreat focuses on student as responsible learner
Inservice for all staff on learning styles
Grant from L.L. Bean

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING AT FREEPORT HIGH SCHOOL

1. WHAT'S DIFFERENT FOR STUDENTS?

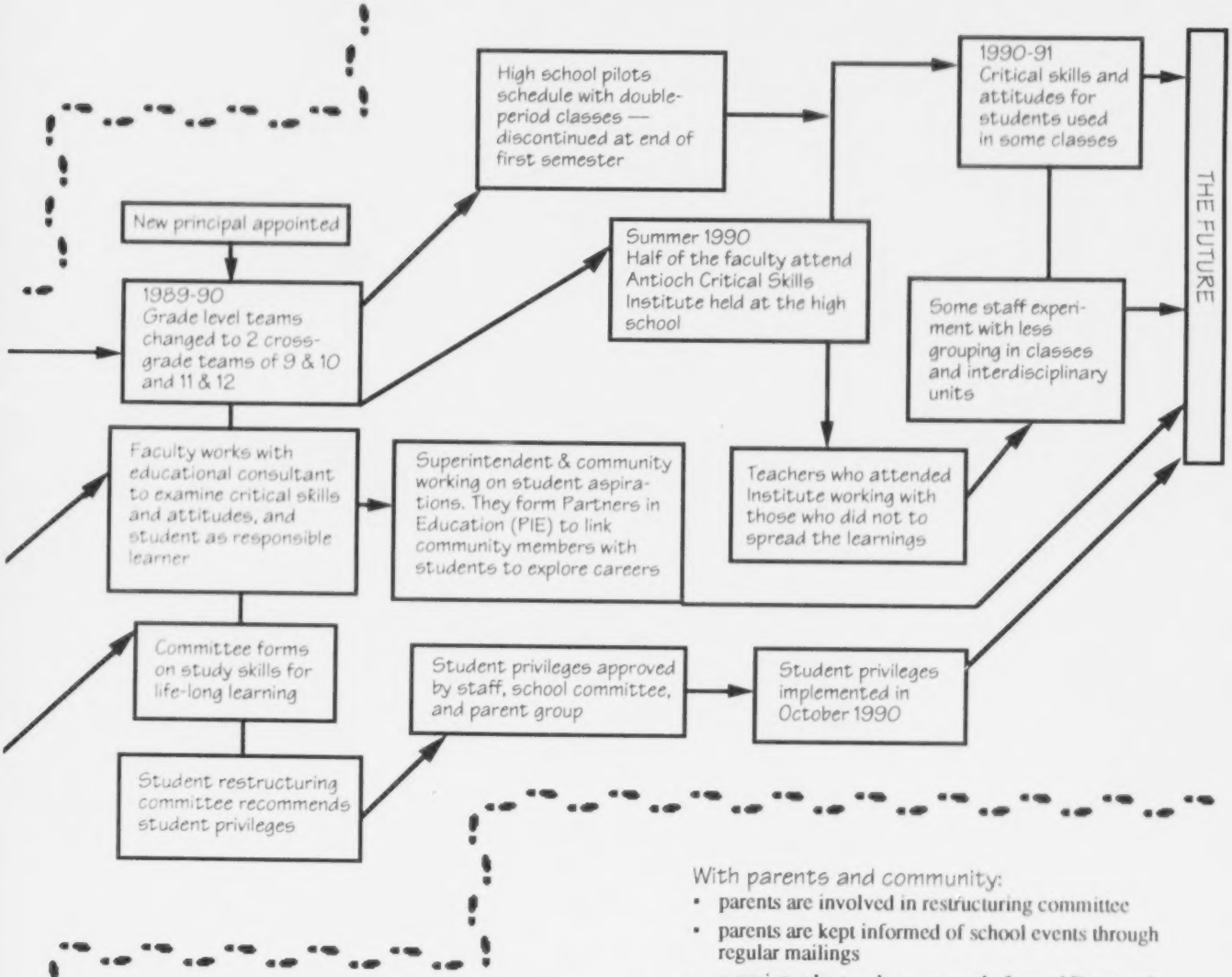
All kids:

- know their own learning styles
- are being taught critical skills across all subject areas
- were surveyed about the best and worst aspects of the high school
- can earn senior privileges that allow them freedom to move about the community
- have representatives on a student restructuring committee

2. WHAT'S DIFFERENT ABOUT TEACHING AND LEARNING?

Teachers:

- had the opportunity to attend Antioch's Critical Skills Institute (Summer 1990)
- who attended the Critical Skills Institute are paired with those who did not to share learnings
- present critical skills to students through subject areas
- are limiting areas on which teaching is focused
- are exploring different methods of assessment
- are experimenting with interdisciplinary curricular projects


New principal appointed
1989-90
Grade level teams changed to 2 cross-grade teams of 9 & 10 and 11 & 12
High school pilots schedule with double-period classes — discontinued at end of first semester
Summer 1990
Half of the faculty attend Antioch Critical Skills Institute held at the high school
1990-91
Critical skills and attitudes for students used in some classes
Some staff experiment with less grouping in classes and interdisciplinary units
THE FUTURE
Faculty works with educational consultant to examine critical skills and attitudes, and student as responsible learner
Superintendent & community working on student aspirations. They form Partners in Education (PIE) to link community members with students to explore careers
Teachers who attended Institute working with those who did not to spread the learnings
Committee forms on study skills for life-long learning
Student privileges approved by staff, school committee, and parent group
Student privileges implemented in October 1990
Student restructuring committee recommends student privileges

3. WHAT'S DIFFERENT ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION AND OPERATION OF THE SCHOOL?

The school is organized to provide:

- two teacher teams, grades 9–10 and 11–12, which deal with students, educational issues, and schoolwide goals
- specialists who work with teams as needed
- an eight period day with one period of team meetings each day
- retreats for entire staff
- ways of helping staff to consider different ways of using time (tried double periods during the 1989–90 school year but did not continue)
- privileges for students adopted from student recommendations

4. WHAT CONNECTIONS ARE BEING BUILT?

Within the school district:

- middle school concept is in place with untracked classes

With parents and community:

- parents are involved in restructuring committee
- parents are kept informed of school events through regular mailings
- superintendent and townspeople formed Partners In Education (P.I.E.); community members work with teachers
- the school worked with local businesses to develop a pamphlet on student rights and responsibilities as workers
- parents have a choice of three different programs at the elementary level

With assistance resources:

- high school staff worked with an independent consultant to define critical skills
- high school participates in the Southern Maine Partnership

5. WHAT QUESTIONS ARE BEING ASKED?

- How to schedule time in school day to meet and balance all needs?
- What are alternative methods of assessment?
- How to continue restructuring after the end of the grant?

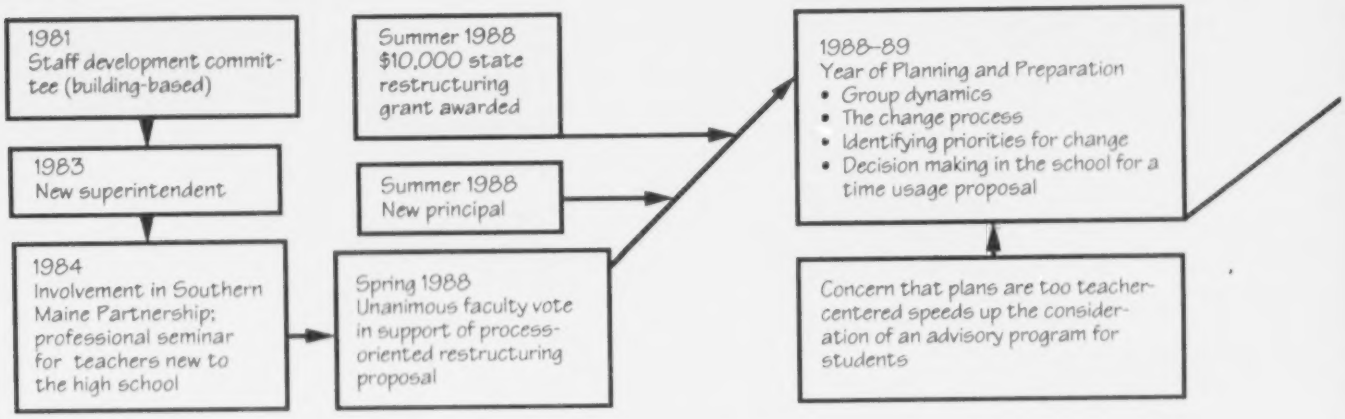
GORHAM HIGH SCHOOL: *"Restructuring begins with time for thinking"*

Gorham High School, which serves a rapidly growing community west of Portland, has a staff of 45 and a student body of 520. It is one of two schools in Gorham that received state restructuring grant money, the other being the Narragansett Elementary School. The town of Gorham is also home to the University of Southern Maine (USM) which has a strong education program; USM's Southern Maine Partnership played a critical role as an initial catalyst in the high school's restructuring effort. The high school is continuing to use a schedule that was piloted during half of the 1989-90 school year. This schedule has three major "new" components: 1) a two-hour School Development Period each week during which the entire faculty works on restructuring issues and staff development; 2) a student advisory program; and 3) four class periods per subject per week, with one of them an extended period. Together, these changes have enabled and promoted efforts by the faculty to seek new teaching and learning strategies.

During the last two years, the Staff Development Committee has struggled to sufficiently meet the needs of all faculty members. Disagreements have arisen regarding the priorities for school improvement, how decisions should be made, and whether the advisory program should be continued and/or changed. Although there is still some disagreement regarding the priorities for school improvement, this has diminished since eight task forces were created in the fall of 1990 for the restructuring issues that the faculty decided were their top priorities. In addition, a new decision making process was implemented in the fall of 1990 and has been received very favorably by all constituencies.

The point on which there is the most widespread agreement is that the weekly School Development Period is essential to enabling the faculty to succeed in the difficult task of improving student performance. As expected, the change process has proven to be very difficult, but there is optimism that the support for restructuring will continue and that the change process that has begun at the high school will soon begin to have a significant impact on student performance.

GORHAM HIGH SCHOOL'S JOURNEY


1981
Staff development committee (building-based)
1983
New superintendent
1984
Involvement in Southern Maine Partnership; professional seminar for teachers new to the high school
Summer 1988
$10,000 state restructuring grant awarded
Summer 1988
New principal
Spring 1988
Unanimous faculty vote in support of process-oriented restructuring proposal
1988–89
Year of Planning and Preparation
• Group dynamics
• The change process
• Identifying priorities for change
• Decision making in the school for a time usage proposal
Concern that plans are too teacher-centered speeds up the consideration of an advisory program for students

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING AT GORHAM HIGH SCHOOL

1. WHAT'S DIFFERENT FOR STUDENTS?

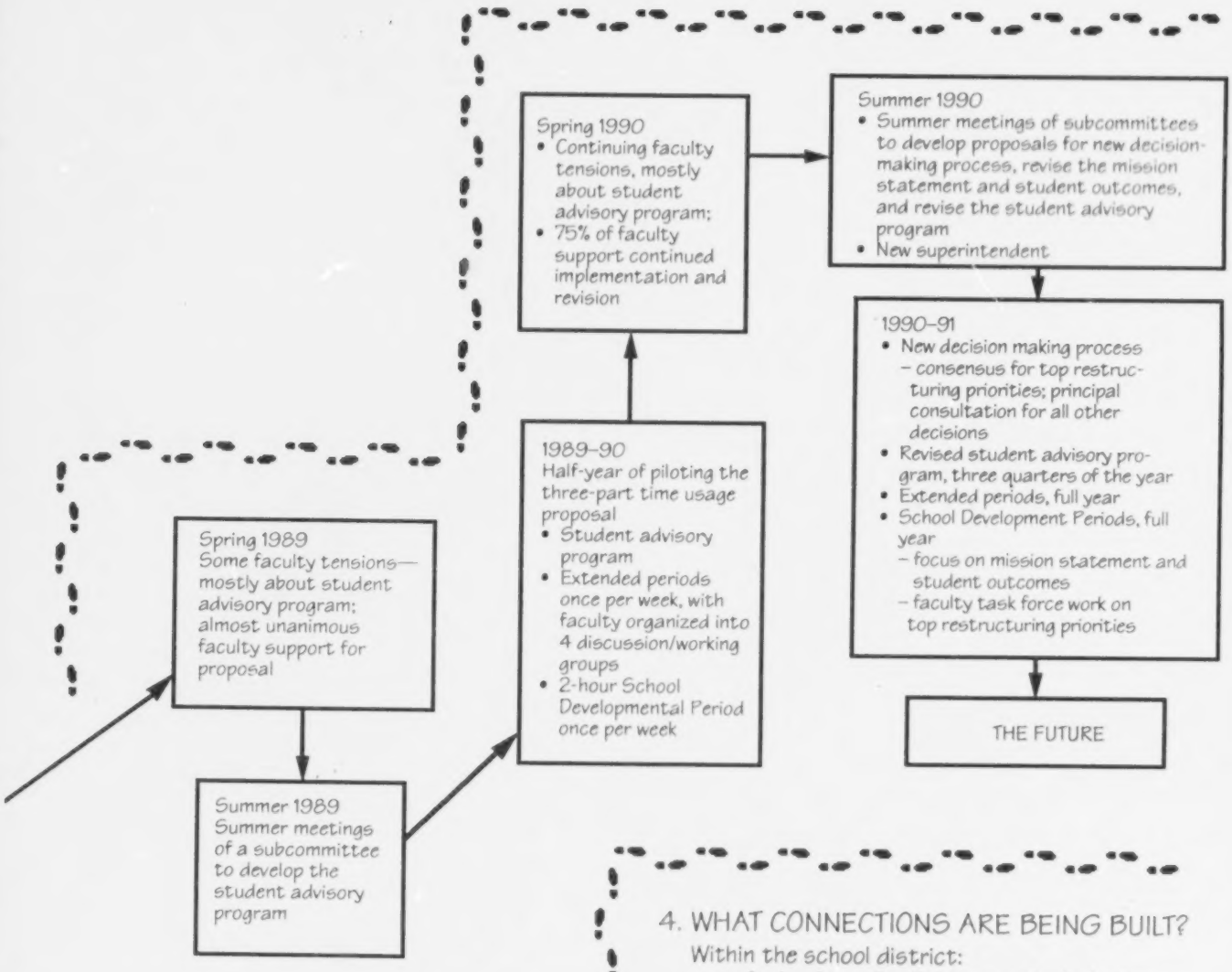
All kids:

- have student representatives on the Restructuring Team
- participate in grade level advisory groups once per week to focus on group process skills, school/community projects, and academic advising
- attend classes in each subject four times per week; one class each week is 73 minutes long
- experience an untracked math curriculum in ninth grade

2. WHAT'S DIFFERENT ABOUT TEACHING AND LEARNING?

Teachers:

- have a two-hour block of time each week for staff development and restructuring work
- are exploring changes in teaching strategies for longer class periods
- have the choice to be advisors or observers in the student advisory program
- are defining desired student outcomes


Spring 1989
Some faculty tensions—mostly about student advisory program; almost unanimous faculty support for proposal
Summer 1989
Summer meetings of a subcommittee to develop the student advisory program
1989–90
Half-year of piloting the three-part time usage proposal
• Student advisory program
• Extended periods once per week, with faculty organized into 4 discussion/working groups
• 2-hour School Developmental Period once per week
Spring 1990
• Continuing faculty tensions, mostly about student advisory program;
• 75% of faculty support continued implementation and revision
Summer 1990
• Summer meetings of subcommittees to develop proposals for new decision-making process, revise the mission statement and student outcomes, and revise the student advisory program
• New superintendent
1990–91
• New decision making process
– consensus for top restructuring priorities; principal consultation for all other decisions
• Revised student advisory program, three quarters of the year
• Extended periods, full year
• School Development Periods, full year
– focus on mission statement and student outcomes
– faculty task force work on top restructuring priorities
THE FUTURE

3. WHAT'S DIFFERENT ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION AND OPERATION OF THE SCHOOL?

The school is organized to provide:

- task forces on assessment, tracking, interdisciplinary curriculum, school technology
- two approaches to decision making that include faculty consensus for top restructuring priorities and principal's decision with consultation on other matters
- a late start for students on Wednesdays to give faculty time for staff development and restructuring work
- faculty development and discussion of new mission statement and general student outcomes
- weekly professional seminars for teachers new to the high school

4. WHAT CONNECTIONS ARE BEING BUILT?

Within the school district:

- professional trust (but little communication) exists among the schools in the district
- school board representatives serve on the Restructuring Team
- the school board supported the change in schedule

With parents and the community:

- parents serve on the Restructuring Team

With assistance resources:

- membership in Southern Maine Partnership
- university consultant has been part of the Restructuring Team

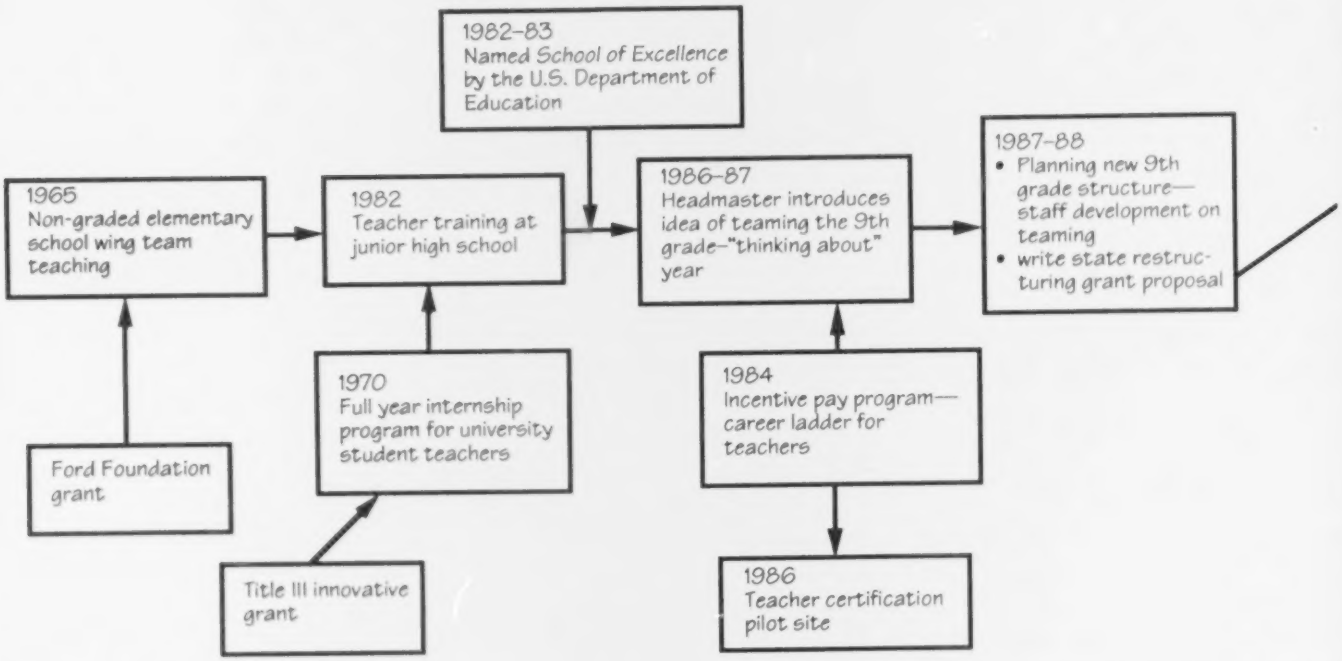
5. WHAT QUESTIONS ARE BEING ASKED?

- How can we improve student performance?
- How can we simultaneously accommodate the individual differences among faculty members and restructure as a school?
- To what degree will the School Committee support the restructuring effort with budget funds if state grant money does not continue past the original three-year grant?
- How can we support efforts to continue restructuring districtwide and statewide?

KENNEBUNK HIGH SCHOOL: *"Using teaming to individualize education for each student"*

Kennebunk High School serves approximately 625 students in grades 9-12 in the southern Maine coastal communities of Kennebunk and Kennebunkport and tuitioned students from the neighboring town of Arundel. The area has wide economic diversity. For example, Kennebunkport has many summer homes as well as year-round residents who commute to jobs as far away as Boston. Locally, the major industries are fishing, lobstering, and tourism. The school district has a history of educational innovation and excellence. The ninth grade restructuring is one of a number of initiatives being implemented or studied by the high school staff. Others include: developing incentives for community members to join under-enrolled high school classes; consideration of an 18-hour school day with six hours for academic classes, six hours for interest areas such as art, music, dance, and photography, and six hours for adult education; creating a more relevant curriculum for career bound students; and studying Howard Gardner's theory of seven intelligences and its application to teaching and learning. The Kennebunk High faculty are always searching for better ways to meet the needs of their students: "We are restructuring our restructuring."

KENNEBUNK HIGH SCHOOL'S JOURNEY


1982–83
Named School of Excellence by the U.S. Department of Education
1965
Non-graded elementary school wing team teaching
1982
Teacher training at junior high school
1986–87
Headmaster introduces idea of teaming the 9th grade–"thinking about" year
1987–88
• Planning new 9th grade structure—staff development on teaming
• write state restructuring grant proposal
Ford Foundation grant
1970
Full year internship program for university student teachers
1984
Incentive pay program—career ladder for teachers
Title III innovative grant
1986
Teacher certification pilot site

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING AT KENNEBUNK HIGH SCHOOL

1. WHAT'S DIFFERENT FOR STUDENTS?

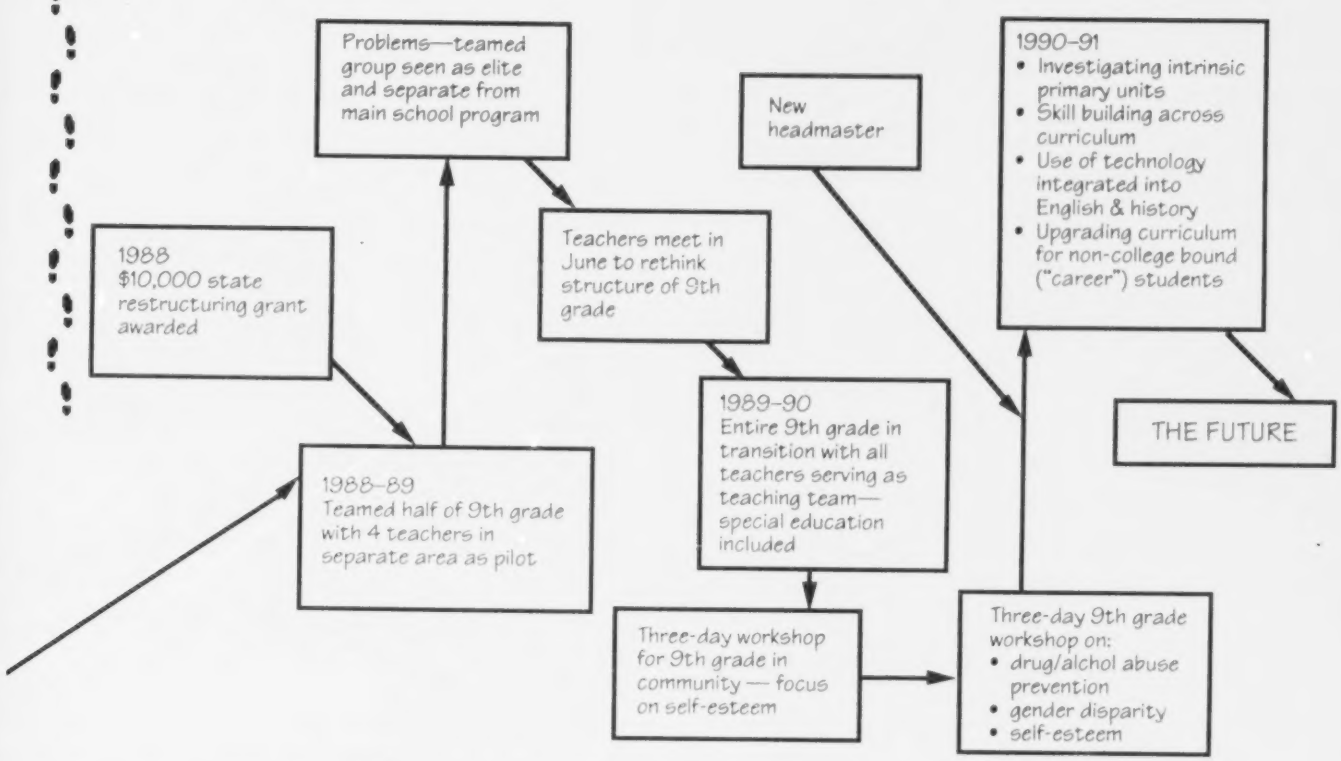
All kids:

- have thinking and organization skill building in all classes during ninth grade
- are supported as individuals
- learn word processing
- use computers regularly in their course work
- have access to extra tutoring as needed
- visit area vocational programs for career exploration
- participate in a three-day community sponsored event on drug and alcohol abuse prevention, gender disparity, and self-esteem

2. WHAT'S DIFFERENT ABOUT TEACHING AND LEARNING?

Teachers:

- of ninth grade students operate as a team
- integrate skill building into all classes
- use integrated thematic approaches to learning, developing common themes across disciplines
- in English and history work with business educators in the computer technology lab
- in math and science team teach with industrial arts staff, using industrial arts as a technology lab for those subject areas


Problems—teamed group seen as elite and separate from main school program
1990–91
• Investigating intrinsic primary units
• Skill building across curriculum
• Use of technology integrated into English & history
• Upgrading curriculum for non-college bound ("career") students
New headmaster
1988
$10,000 state restructuring grant awarded
Teachers meet in June to rethink structure of 9th grade
1989–90
Entire 9th grade in transition with all teachers serving as teaching team—special education included
THE FUTURE
1988–89
Teamed half of 9th grade with 4 teachers in separate area as pilot
Three-day workshop for 9th grade in community — focus on self-esteem
Three-day 9th grade workshop on:
• drug/alchol abuse prevention
• gender disparity
• self-esteem

Teachers (continued):

- use a variety of teaching strategies, including "hands on," to meet individual needs
- intervene immediately when students are having either academic or personal difficulties
- use local educational resources like the Great Bay Living Lab to supplement courses

3. WHAT'S DIFFERENT ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION AND OPERATION OF THE SCHOOL?

The school is organized to provide:

- team meeting time for ninth grade teachers every day to discuss interdisciplinary teaching and to monitor individual student progress, both academic and behavioral
- special services staff working with the teacher team to develop support strategies for individual students
- a technology lab with Macintosh computers
- ongoing exploration of ways to improve teaching and learning through synectics

4. WHAT CONNECTIONS ARE BEING BUILT?

Within the school district:

- ninth grade staff works closely with middle school to ensure continuity and comfortable transition to high school for students

With parents and community:

- local Rotary helps provide a program that includes academic and extracurricular offerings
- businesses provide mentors for students to explore job opportunities
- community people serve as facilitators for the three day ninth grade self-esteem workshop

With assistance resources:

- close links with the University of Southern Maine
- student teachers from the University of New England and the University of Southern Maine
- science classes have programs with the University of New Hampshire's Great Bay Living Lab

5. WHAT QUESTIONS ARE BEING ASKED?

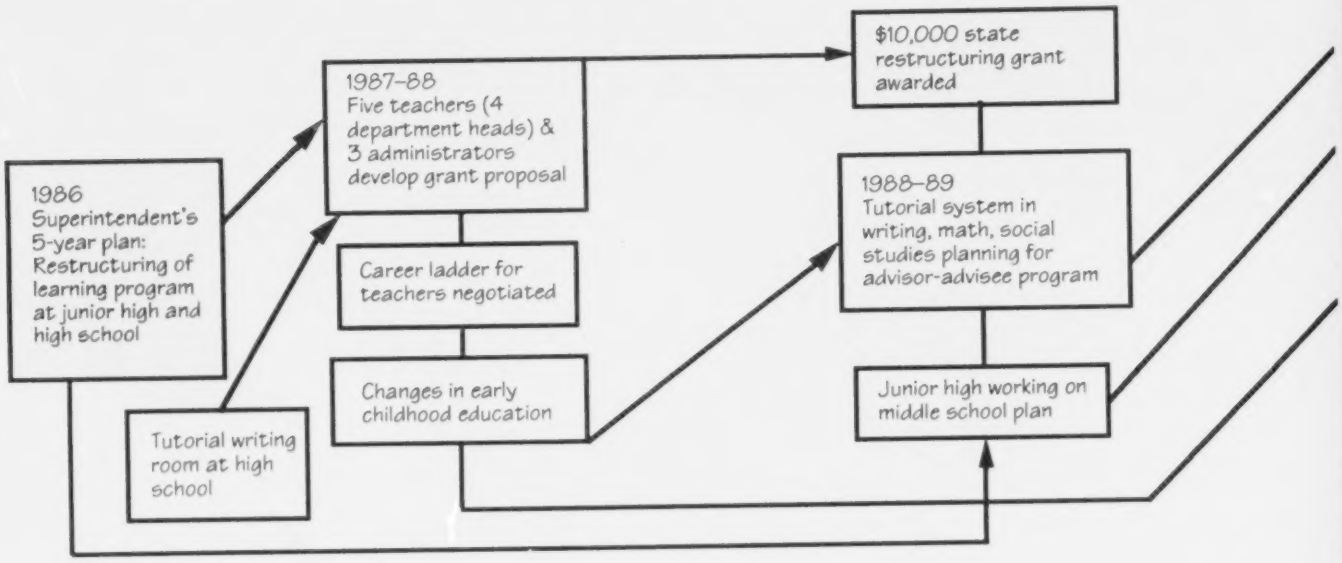
- How do we develop a comparable program appropriate for each age level and student development level at the high school?
- How can we restructure ourselves to create an even closer working unit of teachers and students?
- How do we reschedule ourselves to allow for more flexible teaching time slots and still be comfortably integrated with overall high school schedule of allied arts, foreign language, etc.?

MESSALONSKEE HIGH SCHOOL: *"What goes on inside the school should look as different as the new outside"*

Messalonskee High School is located in the central Maine community of Oakland and serves 674 students in grades 9-12 from Oakland and the surrounding towns of Belgrade, Sidney, and Rome. Colby College, an excellent liberal arts college, is a nearby resource. The school district has been growing rapidly during the past few years as more and more people settle in the rural farming area and commute to work in nearby Augusta and Waterville. The district reflects the socio-economic and educational diversity of its surroundings: about half of the graduates go directly to work and half to college. Of the high school student population, at least 25 are living totally on their own. As the principal commented, "If anybody is going to mirror the range of what's out there, it's us." A multi-million dollar addition to the school, currently in progress, will add new classrooms and a performing arts center.

The restructuring effort at the high school is part of a districtwide initiative spearheaded by the superintendent, who has gained widespread public support for the schools. School staffs are working on K-12 curriculum coordination, professional growth programs for both teachers and administrators, and a student aspirations project. The superintendent and other staff saw the physical change of the high school building as a time to consider redesigning teaching and learning. Having begun by attempting an all-school advisor-advisee program, the high school is now working on "transitions"—the connections between the middle school years and ninth grade and between the senior year and work or college. During the three years of the project, faculty said, "We've stumbled and we've recouped; now things are really rolling."

MESSALONSKEE HIGH SCHOOL'S JOURNEY


1986
Superintendent's 5-year plan: Restructuring of learning program at junior high and high school
1987–88
Five teachers (4 department heads) & 3 administrators develop grant proposal
$10,000 state restructuring grant awarded
Career ladder for teachers negotiated
Changes in early childhood education
Tutorial writing room at high school
1988–89
Tutorial system in writing, math, social studies planning for advisor-advisee program
Junior high working on middle school plan

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING AT MESSALONSKEE HIGH SCHOOL

1. WHAT'S DIFFERENT FOR STUDENTS?

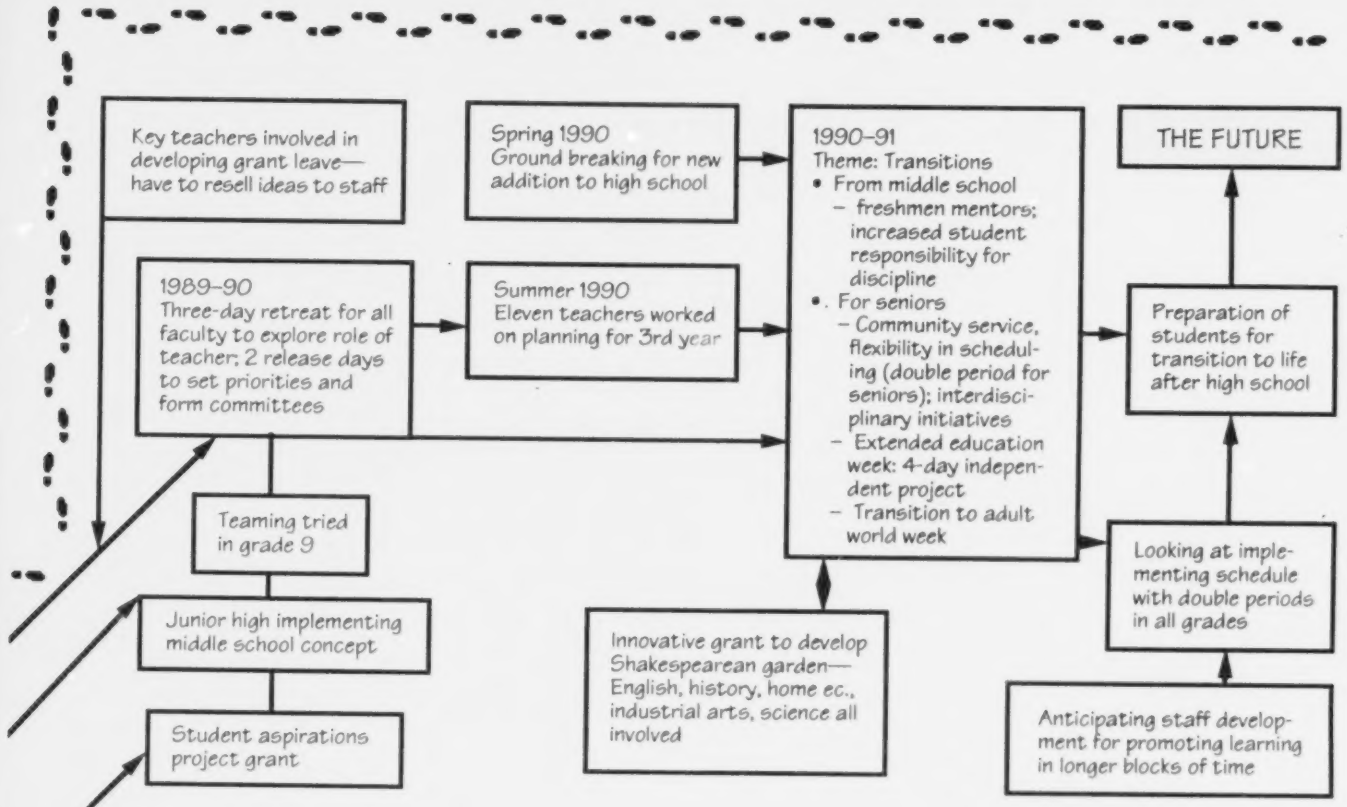
All kids:

- can get help from teachers on any aspect of their learning through a tutorial system available in all subject areas
- have mentors as ninth graders
- develop community service projects as seniors
- have double period classes and classes that do not meet daily as seniors to prepare them to manage learning experiences after high school
- have a retreat to start the senior year that prepares them for new experiences and increased responsibility
- have planned experiences to assist with transitions

2. WHAT'S DIFFERENT ABOUT TEACHING AND LEARNING?

Teachers:

- have tutorial periods to work with students in many different ways
- are developing interdisciplinary units
- serve as mentors for ninth graders
- worked with the principal to develop a new schedule
- are exploring strategies for learning in longer blocks of time, e.g., cooperative learning
- are creating innovative learning experiences — e.g., the project to build a Shakespearean garden, which involves


Key teachers involved in developing grant leave—have to resell ideas to staff
Spring 1990
Ground breaking for new addition to high school
1990–91
Theme: Transitions
• From middle school
– freshmen mentors; increased student responsibility for discipline
• For seniors
– Community service, flexibility in scheduling (double period for seniors); interdisciplinary initiatives
– Extended education week: 4-day independent project
– Transition to adult world week
THE FUTURE
1989–90
Three-day retreat for all faculty to explore role of teacher; 2 release days to set priorities and form committees
Summer 1990
Eleven teachers worked on planning for 3rd year
Preparation of students for transition to life after high school
Teaming tried in grade 9
Junior high implementing middle school concept
Student aspirations project grant
Innovative grant to develop Shakespearean garden—English, history, home ec., industrial arts, science all involved
Looking at implementing schedule with double periods in all grades
Anticipating staff development for promoting learning in longer blocks of time

Teachers (continued):

English, social studies/history, science, home economics, and industrial arts

- are seeking ways to help students to become more responsible citizens

3. WHAT'S DIFFERENT ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION AND OPERATION OF THE SCHOOL?

The school is organized to provide:

- an untracked education with much higher expectations for the broad middle of the student body (75% of the total)
- a state-of-the-art library that "is the core of our curriculum"
- a schedule for seniors and their teachers that concentrates on fewer preparations per day

4. WHAT CONNECTIONS ARE BEING BUILT?

Within the school district:

- linkage with middle school provides smooth transition for students
- staff development and curriculum is coordinated K–12
- kindergarten is being restructured into integrated transitional program
- a new cross-level initiative focuses on open-ended assessment and is part of a larger effort sponsored by the state department of education and *Newsweek*

Within the school district (continued):

- a two level career ladder for teachers
- a Director of Staff Development and Special Projects who coordinates new initiatives
- training in clinical supervision for teachers serving as mentors and peer coaches
- computer communication — "Messalonskee Bulletin Board"
- district aspirations team

With parents and community:

- parents are serving as leaders for senior project teams
- school has a corps of substitute teachers from the community
- an active community booster group supports all sports

With assistance resources:

- students and teachers use the library at Colby College
- students attend college science classes
- student teachers from Colby do their practicum at the school
- school shares library resources with other area high schools through an innovative grant, Infofax

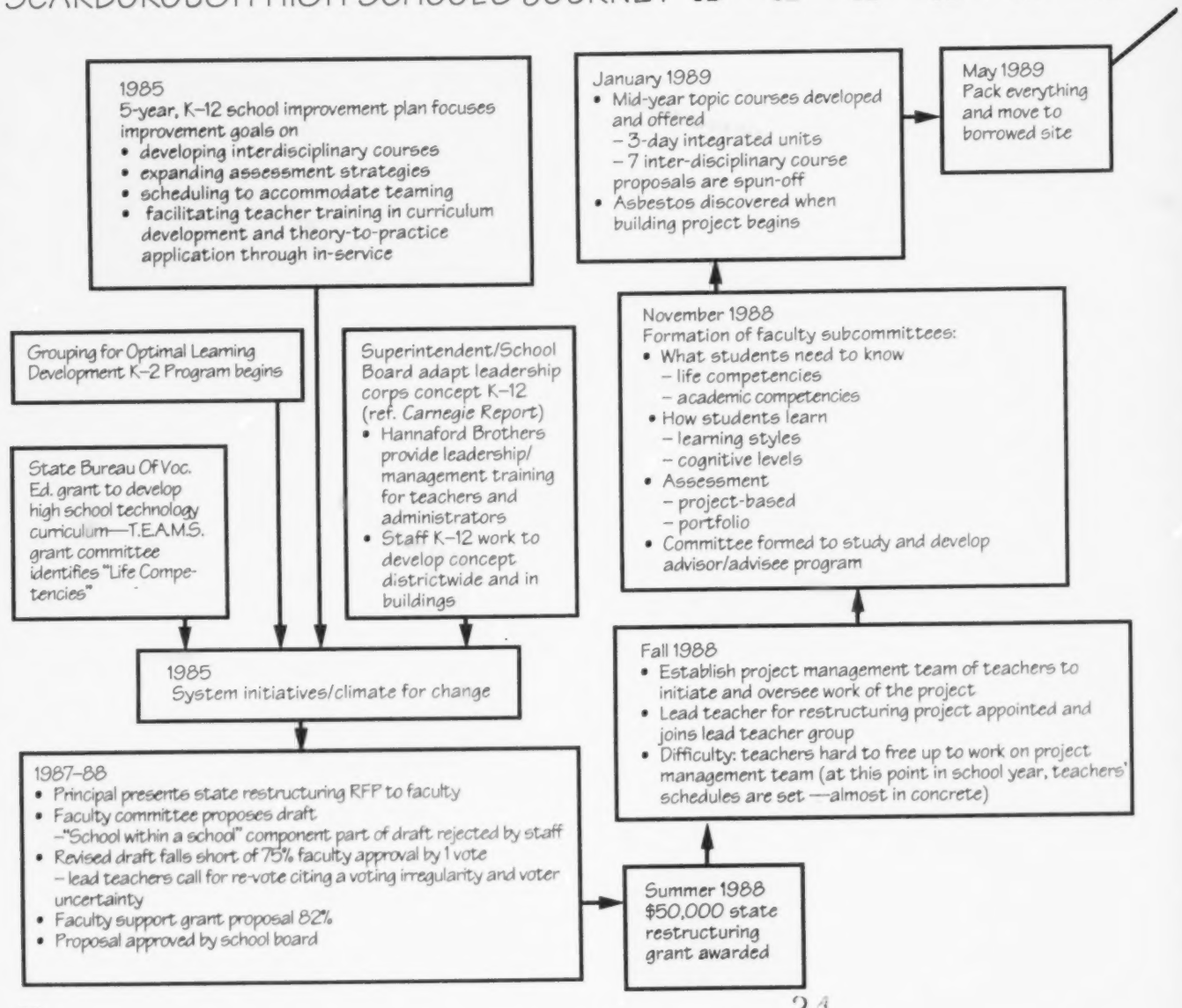
5. WHAT QUESTIONS ARE BEING ASKED?

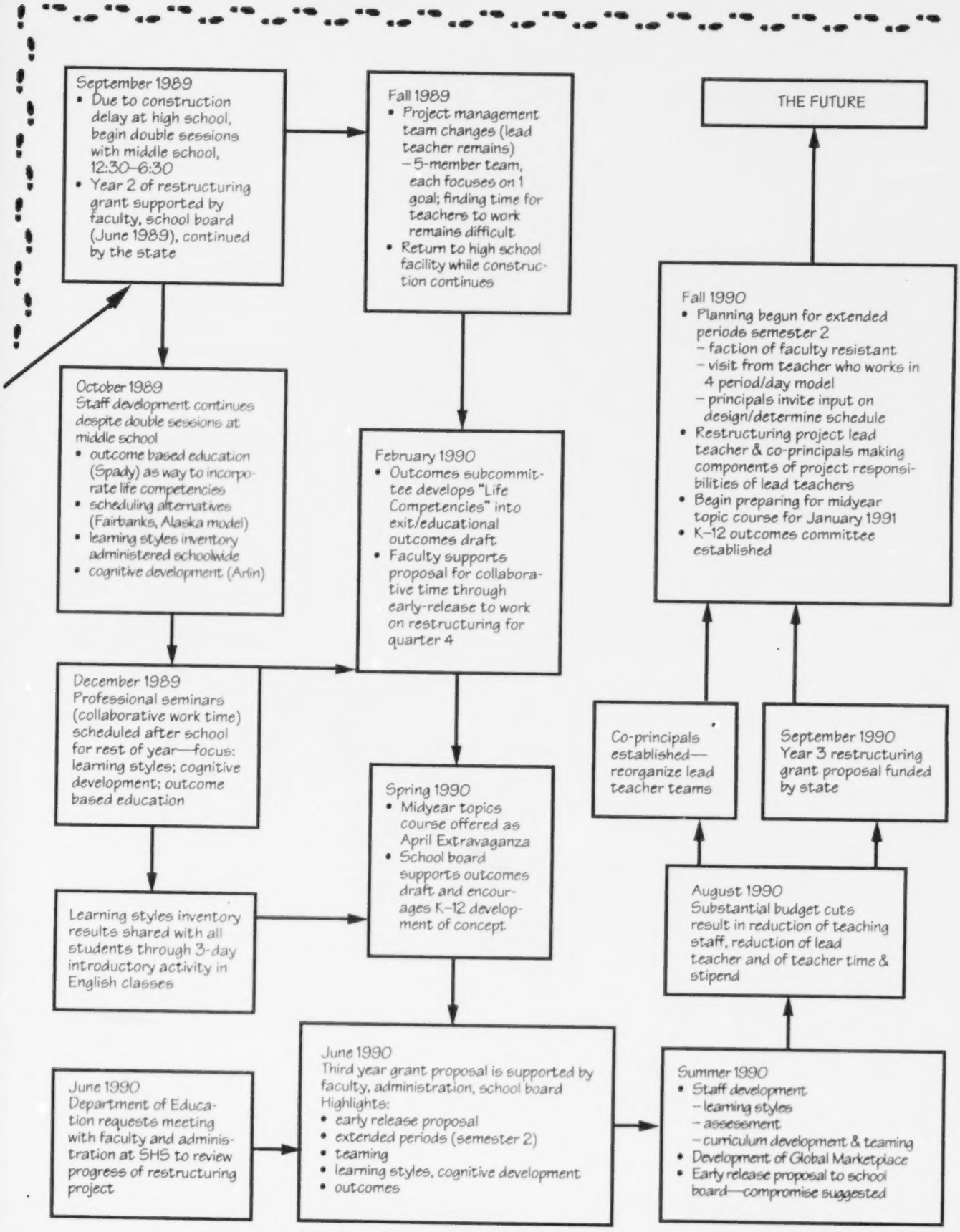
- How can teachers be encouraged and supported to take on new leadership roles?
- How do we assist or encourage students to become life-long learners?

SCARBOROUGH HIGH SCHOOL: *"Student outcomes have become the catalyst for moving in restructuring"*

Scarborough High School, located in a fast growing suburban community a few miles south of Portland, serves about 500 students in grades 9–12 and has a faculty of about 50. Scarborough's socio-economic and educational diversity is reflected in the high school: 40% of the school's graduates go directly to work and 60% to some form of higher education. The school district has been involved for some time in initiatives that give students and parents a choice about the structure and delivery of their educational programs. For example, in 1985, the Grouping for Optimal Learning Development Program, a multi-age development-based program, was developed and implemented in the primary grades K-2 as an alternative approach to learning. This program has been expanded to include the intermediate grades 3-5 and is being introduced at the middle school, grades 6–8. About 50% of parents choose this program for their children. In addition, on the secondary level, an alternative program for "at risk" students was designed in 1986 and implemented in 1987. Further building on the Board of Education's policy promoting choice in educational programs, the high school restructuring effort has sought to foster continued discussion, experimentation and implementation of programs at that level. As the high school staff work to enhance learning for all students, they find they are constantly "bumping the boundaries" in areas such as student assessment and interdisciplinary teaming and teaching.

SCARBOROUGH HIGH SCHOOL'S JOURNEY


1985
5-year, K–12 school improvement plan focuses improvement goals on
• developing interdisciplinary courses
• expanding assessment strategies
• scheduling to accommodate teaming
• facilitating teacher training in curriculum development and theory-to-practice application through in-service
January 1989
• Mid-year topic courses developed and offered
– 3-day integrated units
– 7 inter-disciplinary course proposals are spun-off
• Asbestos discovered when building project begins
May 1989
Pack everything and move to borrowed site
November 1988
Formation of faculty subcommittees:
• What students need to know
– life competencies
– academic competencies
• How students learn
– learning styles
– cognitive levels
• Assessment
– project-based
– portfolio
• Committee formed to study and develop advisor/advisee program
Grouping for Optimal Learning Development K–2 Program begins
Superintendent/School Board adapt leadership corps concept K–12 (ref. Carnegie Report)
• Hannaford Brothers provide leadership/ management training for teachers and administrators
• Staff K–12 work to develop concept districtwide and in buildings
State Bureau Of Voc. Ed. grant to develop high school technology curriculum—T.E.A.M.S. grant committee identifies "Life Competencies"
1985
System initiatives/climate for change
Fall 1988
• Establish project management team of teachers to initiate and oversee work of the project
• Lead teacher for restructuring project appointed and joins lead teacher group
• Difficulty: teachers hard to free up to work on project management team (at this point in school year, teachers' schedules are set —almost in concrete)
1987–88
• Principal presents state restructuring RFP to faculty
• Faculty committee proposes draft
–"School within a school" component part of draft rejected by staff
• Revised draft falls short of 75% faculty approval by 1 vote
– lead teachers call for re-vote citing a voting irregularity and voter uncertainty
• Faculty support grant proposal 82%
• Proposal approved by school board
Summer 1988
$50,000 state restructuring grant awarded


September 1989
• Due to construction delay at high school, begin double sessions with middle school, 12:30–6:30
• Year 2 of restructuring grant supported by faculty, school board (June 1989), continued by the state
Fall 1989
• Project management team changes (lead teacher remains)
– 5-member team, each focuses on 1 goal; finding time for teachers to work remains difficult
• Return to high school facility while construction continues
THE FUTURE
Fall 1990
• Planning begun for extended periods semester 2
– faction of faculty resistant
– visit from teacher who works in 4 period/day model
– principals invite input on design/determine schedule
• Restructuring project lead teacher & co-principals making components of project responsibilities of lead teachers
• Begin preparing for midyear topic course for January 1991
• K–12 outcomes committee established
October 1989
Staff development continues despite double sessions at middle school
• outcome based education (Spady) as way to incorporate life competencies
• scheduling alternatives (Fairbanks, Alaska model)
• learning styles inventory administered schoolwide
• cognitive development (Arlin)
February 1990
• Outcomes subcommittee develops "Life Competencies" into exit/educational outcomes draft
• Faculty supports proposal for collaborative time through early-release to work on restructuring for quarter 4
December 1989
Professional seminars (collaborative work time) scheduled after school for rest of year—focus: learning styles; cognitive development; outcome based education
Co-principals established—reorganize lead teacher teams
September 1990
Year 3 restructuring grant proposal funded by state
Spring 1990
• Midyear topics course offered as April Extravaganza
• School board supports outcomes draft and encourages K–12 development of concept
Learning styles inventory results shared with all students through 3-day introductory activity in English classes
August 1990
Substantial budget cuts result in reduction of teaching staff, reduction of lead teacher and of teacher time & stipend
June 1990
Department of Education requests meeting with faculty and administration at SHS to review progress of restructuring project
June 1990
Third year grant proposal is supported by faculty, administration, school board
Highlights:
• early release proposal
• extended periods (semester 2)
• teaming
• learning styles, cognitive development
• outcomes
Summer 1990
• Staff development
– learning styles
– assessment
– curriculum development & teaming
• Development of Global Marketplace
• Early release proposal to school board—compromise suggested

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING AT SCARBOROUGH HIGH SCHOOL

1. WHAT'S DIFFERENT FOR STUDENTS?

All kids:

- are seen as workers
- learn about their learning styles and are matched with teachers with a variety of styles for discussion on their first day as ninth graders
- are being helped to critique their own work
- can be involved in the Global Marketplace project either through classes or individually
- are encouraged to develop portfolios and take them on visits to colleges as juniors
- have the choice of interdisciplinary courses
- participate in a three-day interdisciplinary experience

2. WHAT'S DIFFERENT ABOUT TEACHING AND LEARNING?

Teachers:

- are developing learning outcomes focused on student as self, thinker, worker, citizen, and lifelong learner
- are using an understanding of learning styles and cognitive levels in delivering content
- are organized in five teams: math and business; English and library; science and technology; social studies and foreign language; and special education, art, music, and home economics
- are using content to teach to desired student outcomes
- are developing interdisciplinary approaches
- have created intensive interdisciplinary units, including the three-day mid-year topics in 1988 and the week-long April Extravaganza in 1990
- have changed the school culture so questioning is encouraged
- are searching for ways to eliminate tracking of students
- are working with the Global Marketplace project which provides interdisciplinary activities and experiential learning
- are developing alternative assessments based on student competencies
- are incorporating business resources in classroom activities

3. WHAT'S DIFFERENT ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION AND OPERATION OF THE SCHOOL?

The school is organized to provide:

- lead teachers for each team who are responsible for student discipline, budget, scheduling, support for innovation and teaching excellence
- ongoing forums for discussion of redefining roles of teachers
- the possibility of moving beyond departments to an interdisciplinary structure
- a steering committee made up of lead teachers from each team who meet weekly

The school is organized to provide (continued):

- time for teachers to work together
- a hiring process that recruits new staff who respect the philosophical base of the school
- staff development opportunities for all staff prior to implementation of lengthened class periods in early 1991
- analysis of the effects of tracking in the high school and discussion of what to do differently

4. WHAT CONNECTIONS ARE BEING BUILT?

Within the school district:

- potential links with Grouping for Optimal Learning Development K–2 Program are being explored
- superintendent and school board are supportive of restructuring
- K–12 leadership team meets monthly
- the high school has met with K-8 representatives to integrate work on student outcomes
- because of budget cuts, staff from different schools have moved around the district, building a network among the schools

With parents and community:

- parent advisory group approves new courses
- school board is sponsoring a public relations campaign in 1990–91
- community parent started the Global Marketplace project
- Hannaford Brothers (supermarket chain) provides administrative training for lead teachers
- businesses are working with the school to identify educational needs of entry-level workers

With assistance resources:

- institutions of higher education have been contacted about the acceptability of outcomes-based assessment in college admissions
- Restructuring Project Advisory Committee is made up of representatives from businesses and educational organizations
- district is a member of the Southern Maine Partnership at the University of Southern Maine
- the high school has links with the Scarborough Chamber of Commerce

5. WHAT QUESTIONS ARE BEING ASKED?

- How to work with the community so that people understand and support educational change?
- How to create a statewide network to support restructuring?
- How to continue the work in a time of decreasing revenues?
- How to restructure time to allow for the development of the student as active learner?
- How to structure time for teacher collaboration?

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

The preceding pages have profiled the experiences of ten Maine schools that have been working to rethink and reshape their learning environments in ways that work for ALL students. Each of these schools has been aided in its efforts by a restructuring grant from the Maine Department of Education, which has been an active participant during the three years of the Maine State Restructuring Program.

This is not a tidy process but involves a lot of crashing and clashing, like tectonic plates.

What have the schools, the department of education, and others learned through these efforts? In interviews with individuals and at meetings of school teams and the restructuring program steering committee, participants shared the following reflections.

There is no single recipe for restructuring. Each school, each district, each community, each state must work out its own vision, plan, and action to develop the potential of its young people.

While there is not a single recipe, there are some common ingredients in the schools' restructuring experiences. These ingredients can be grouped under four broad headings: getting clear on the focus of change; making change organizational and systemic; managing the ongoing change process; and deploying state restructuring grant funds to spur change.

GETTING CLEAR ON THE FOCUS OF CHANGE

Although the schools may have begun their work in different places, they have all focused in some way on five critical elements of the teaching and learning process: shared vision, student outcomes, curriculum and instruction, assessment, and professional development.

Building a shared vision of what students should know and be able to do

- *Restructuring depends on vision and action within each school and community, which means getting beyond doing what "they" want, whoever the "they" is.* Significant change in many of the schools began long before the state grant was awarded; other schools used the restructuring grant to get started. In either case, the designation as a restructuring school and the funding that accompanied it were significant boosts but did not cause the efforts — the main initiative came from, and remains with, the schools. Indeed, the major requirement of the request for proposals issued by the state department of education was that a school had to have or develop a vision to guide its restructuring effort.

Defining student outcomes that bring the vision to life

- *Restructuring surfaces the need for school staff to articulate explicitly the expected results for students.* This does not mean hundreds of mastery objectives, but a limited list that focuses on each student as a whole person. At some point, all the schools have turned to recent research on child development, learning processes, and related topics to assist them in understanding the rich varieties of potential that youngsters can possess. As one lead teacher commented, "Each issue we work on has its own orbit; you may swing out but you end up coming back to it, over and over again. It's coming back to student outcomes that keeps us from going too far out on any aspect of our work."

- *Restructuring centers on helping ALL students to learn successfully.* The schools are taking as their challenge doing well by all students, not just the college-bound. All students are to be encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and made to feel that they are capable and competent to master the job at hand. To achieve this end, the teacher's role becomes one of a facilitator of learning, providing the frame and the experiences for exploration. In like manner, principals work to facilitate the efforts of teachers and others to create an organization in which all staff make decisions about the use of time and resources to foster student learning, where innovative ideas are encouraged, and where adult learning is a priority as well. School-based educators work with superintendents and school boards to make certain that the restructuring vision is widely shared and supported. Parents and community members become resources for the schools, serve on planning committees, and are mentors for students.

When you think of it, education has always been focused on curriculum and teaching, not on learning.

Distilling and integrating curriculum along with broadening the repertoire of instructional strategies

- *Restructuring shifts the emphasis of curriculum and instruction from proliferation of subjects and facts to be conveyed to a focus on essential concepts and relationships that students need to learn.* Interdisciplinary units, theme and project work allow in-depth study. Hands-on science and problem solving in other curriculum areas actively engage students in learning. These types of approaches require longer periods of time than have traditionally been allotted and stimulate teachers to move beyond the whole class lecture method.

Altering assessment to capture what students know and are able to do in order to inform next steps

- *Restructuring demands that assessment of student performance be an integral part of the learning process, so that students and their teachers get feedback on their actions.* The schools, working in different ways, have begun to change assessment so that students — starting at the primary level — learn to reflect on the quality of their work; teachers learn to evaluate the impact of their teaching; and schools and districts learn to judge the effectiveness of their support.

Expanding professional development to include learning while doing and learning from doing

There needs to be quality time for adult learning, not just time tacked on at the end of a school day.

- *Restructuring requires that adults in the school and in the community acquire new knowledge and skills to be able to provide enhanced learning opportunities for the young.* Research on learning processes, on cognitive, social, and emotional development, and in the content areas provides critical direction for restructuring. All ten schools have made acquisition of new knowledge and skills by adults an essential part of their restructuring efforts. Just as businesses are finding that change is happening so rapidly that learning must be done "on the job," so schools are realizing that learning has to be an ongoing part of their staffs' work.

  Conceptions of professional development are changing: from "preservice education prepares one for everything," to "one day of inservice each year," to "several days per year," to "professional development as a routine part of work," to "the school as a center of inquiry," where learning for both children and adults is an ongoing process. Adults in and around the school need continual learning of two types: a) about how and what their students are learning and b) about the best of research and exemplary practice on a whole range of topics, including organizational development and systemic change.

No change that's significant change is easy change.

  The schools are working to get beyond the "gap" created when teachers are absent from their students for professional development or team work. They are rethinking the teacher's relationship to students. For example, if teachers work in a team with students, one teacher can be absent for a meeting while the rest of the team works with the students so learning time will not be lost.

- *Restructuring is an intensely personal experience.* As one coordinator put it, it means "gut-wrenching" change and reconceptualizing oneself as a learner as well as a knower and one's work as learning as well as teaching.

MAKING CHANGE ORGANIZATIONAL AND SYSTEMIC

As the schools have discovered, fundamental changes in teaching and learning are not possible without changes in the way the school is organized and operated. They have also found that change inside the school has implications for parents and community, for other schools in the district, for higher education, and for the state department of education and others.

- *Restructuring is all about time — making time, taking time, finding more meaningful ways to spend time.* Imagine a community business that operated three plants, each of which handled a part of the company's core function, a process requiring a total of 12 years of work by about 60 people to produce each "product" — that is, an "educated" young adult. Imagine that in this establishment, there was no "company time" to discuss any "company business" at all except one hour each month. Such is the reality in many schools. This is the situation that most of the restructuring schools were in as they began their work: their first change initiative had to be to wring time from the master schedule to begin exchange about company business: students and learning.

- *Restructuring is systemic, because all the levels and parts are interrelated.* The experience of the ten restructuring schools profiled in this booklet illustrates that when one piece of an educational system changes, it causes ripples that affect all the other parts of the system as well. As students learn in new ways and as parents and community members are invited to participate, they develop new expectations of their schools. Changes in teaching and learning at the elementary level have direct impact on the middle school level. Changes at the middle level mean rethinking both by the schools that feed into that school and by the high school. Changes at the high school are felt at the lower levels. Changes in the schools mean change in the district office and vice-versa. Changes in schools and districts mean change in the state department of education and vice-versa. And on it goes: communities, institutions of higher education, and others are all affected by and, in turn, influence other parts of the system.

All those opposing agendas converging can be immobilizing.

- *Restructuring means forging vital links to new ideas and new practices, altering the way state and local people work together, the way school people and university people relate to one another, and so on.* Restructuring around learning in schools and districts means restructuring departments of education and institutions of higher education as well. State departments must reexamine both their regulations and their support for schools. Higher education must look at the way they prepare educators for their roles as well as their requirements and expectations for entering high school graduates.

  Just as schools have been rethinking the way they do business, so has the Maine State Restructuring Program Steering Committee, which has overseen the effort. For example, rather than providing answers, the committee has tried to ask good questions that will help schools, allowing the teams and staffs to find their own answers. The steering committee is composed of representatives from educational groups across the state — the department of education, teachers, administrators, MaineLEAD (Leadership in Educational Administration Development), higher education, the Maine Center for Educational Services, and The Regional Laboratory for Educational Improvement of the Northeast and Islands —and is chaired by the Deputy Commissioner of Education. The committee has coordinated the grant application process and organized workshops and opportunities for the restructuring schools to network. In selecting workshop topics, the committee has tried to address what the schools have identified as their priority issues rather than what the committee thought the schools would need.

  Restructuring is for everybody, not just schools.

  Another important source of good questions and useful resources has been the Southern Maine Partnership at the University of Southern Maine. A part of John Goodlad's national School Renewal Network, the Partnership has inspired teachers and administrators by providing a forum in which to share and test ideas, explore research on teaching and learning, and reflect on their knowledge and experience. For example, the Partnership helped one school design an action research component that allows information about progress to be constantly collected and shared among the staff.

- *Restructuring provokes questions about power: what does it mean to have young people who can think, teachers who can make decisions, administrators who are effective advocates for learning, and school boards and parents who are active and knowledgeable participants in the education process?* As one steering committee member said, we are getting beyond the rhetoric to the reality of sharing power

— into the unsettling and disorienting, but ultimately rewarding, process of trying out new roles and relationships.

MANAGING THE ONGOING CHANGE PROCESS

The schools are realizing that change is going to be a part of their lives forever and that change management — including ongoing design, implementation, support, and evaluation —needs to be a routine part of organizational operations. In short, the schools are becoming increasingly expert at taking charge of change rather than thinking of it as something that just happens.

The way school is supposed to be is powerfully ingrained in all of us, especially teachers who have spent their whole lives in school.

- *Restructuring means learning to manage and maintain change over time, among many people, and in many arenas of action.* The process begins in different places in different schools, but no matter where it starts, restructuring includes the process of getting adults and young alike to be supportive of and participate in change. Not only must the people within a school be receptive to changes, but so must the people in the larger environment in which the school is located — school board, parents, and other community members.

- *Restructuring is simultaneous, interactive, and messy, rather than a tidy and finite sequence of steps.* Moreover, the schools are realizing that they must actively work to maintain changes, or things will revert back to the way they were. Restructuring around student learning is not a "project" with a finite end. It is a new way of working that simultaneously focuses on the process of the work and the products of the work.

- *Restructuring involves adults in the school and in the community talking to one another and with students about what constitutes successful learning and then joining forces to make it happen.* This means that there must be time in the school schedule for adults to work together regularly. Communication between the school and the community must be ongoing. Exchange between adults and youth about learning must be continuous — not just in the classroom but in the home and around the neighborhood. While the ten schools have gone about it differently, initiating and sustaining authentic communication have been necessary parts of the restructuring process for each one.

- *Restructuring around successful learning for all students takes many years and the persistence to make changes, assess results, and modify as necessary.* It involves developing more meaningful ways of "telling if we're getting there," whether it be assessing student progress and helping students to assess their own learning or judging whether a

learning experience has been successful or examining the organizational supports for teacher teams. It means being able to say something didn't work, to regroup, and move on.

It would be easy to look at the ten restructuring schools and say, "They've got it all together; no wonder they could restructure." It is important to note that the schools that have altered learning environments to promote successful learning for all have been at it for five or more years. Moreover, if you examine the histories of these schools, you will find that many of them began with low student motivation and achievement, low faculty and administrator morale, bare-bones budgets, and little community support. For these schools, restructuring has been a process of "getting their act together." Those schools that began the process with more advantages have had to ask hard questions about the reality of how much and how well their students are learning. In doing so, they have rocked the boat — equally an act of courage.

The ten schools don't feel they have it all together: they have more questions than answers, more doubts than certainties— but isn't that what true learning is all about?

- *Restructuring begets questions faster than they are answered.* Long accustomed to thinking of education as supplying answers, the restructuring schools are finding that they are now in the business of helping students and one another to ask questions: What are we doing? Why is that important? How can we work together to make it better? What do we need to work on next?

We are living in an era where the pace of change and the level of complexity mean there are few simple answers and a lot of unknowns— education is not exempt from this.

DEPLOYING STATE RESTRUCTURING GRANT FUNDS TO SPUR CHANGE

All the schools have spent grant funds to make available new skills and knowledge along with time for school staffs to acquire them. *Professional development* that focuses on both learning and organizational issues is a long-term investment in the educators who must reshape schools around learning. School-based educators are working together and using their expertise to make school and classroom changes, assisted by outsiders with other expertise. *Release time* has been another important use of grant money: to free people not only for professional development but also to work together. Ultimately such shared work time needs to be a regularly funded part of the day.

According to the staffs of several schools, the grant funds fostered a *"can do" attitude* and an *impetus to organize budgets around student learning* rather than programs. The grant funds provided *budget flexibility* and *"permission to dream,"* as one school staff put it. The grant funds leveraged more money as schools reallocated and reprioritized beyond traditional budget line items. In a period of financial retrenchment, we must learn to restructure budgets to target resources for enhanced student learning.

The schools mentioned the *recognition and legitimization* that the restructuring award brought and how it helped win and sustain support in their communities.

Finally, the school restructuring teams valued the opportunity provided by the Maine State Restructuring Program to get together three or four times each year to *analyze and reflect in a setting away from the daily routines of the school building*. Through these gatherings staff were able to step back and look at the progress and process of their restructuring efforts.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Restructuring is not another fad; it will not go away. Designing schools to develop the potential of all youngsters will require the continued active engagement of all stakeholders — students, educators, parents, communities, businesses, and policymakers. Together we must work to build visions of schools that focus on what students need to know and be able to do; we must develop and find new ways for students to reflect on and demonstrate their skills and knowledge. Then we must act and reflect in turn as these visions are brought to life. We must work in many places, at the same time, and over the long haul.

On the local level, let us:

- engage in communitywide discussion of restructuring issues, especially the new types of attitudes, knowledge, and skills that all young people must develop;
- create public awareness about new learning outcomes and the development of new teaching and learning experiences along with more useful ways of assessing student progress;
- articulate the connections between learning outcomes and learning opportunities and how the community, system, and school can be organized to support them;
- expand the use of communications technology to support new ways of teaching and learning within school and to link school to home;
- develop new methods of assessment, such as multimedia portfolios and demonstrations, to supplement standardized testing;
- develop ways of scheduling use of time in schools (at all levels) to support and manage the work of restructuring and ongoing professional development for educators;
- consider how a restructuring school can forge linkages with other schools in its district;
- rethink staffing and use of resources as more types of learning opportunities are invented;
- reorganize school and district budgets around the learning of all students; and
- recast the role of the central office as the facilitator of learning-centered restructuring.

On the state level, let us:

- continue to foster the development of new visions of the way we educate the young;
- form a statewide coalition of educators, business people, municipal officers, and legislators to forge and support a vision of new ways of schooling that support teaching and learning, and to broaden the effort school district by school district;
- use the Maine Common Core of Learning as a basis for community forums about teaching and learning within schools, within communities, and across the state;
- consider the role of the department of education in encouraging and modeling new structures;
- examine the implications of learning-centered restructuring for the department of education's own organization and operation;
- find funding and other resources to support and encourage continued innovation;
- build coalitions between higher education and K-12 education to address changes in teacher education and professional development that support restructuring and college admission requirements that include new assessment strategies; and
- link with national efforts to exchange current research and ideas about school change.

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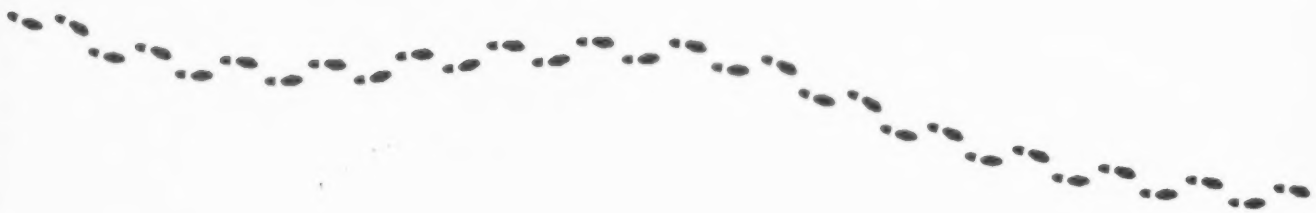

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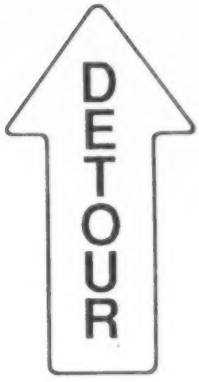

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